

# New war, old enemies: Conflict dynamics in South Kordofan

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# List of abbreviations

<b>APC</b>	Armoured personnel carrier
<b>AUHIP</b>	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan
<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
<b>CRP</b>	Central Reserve Police
<b>GoS</b>	Government of Sudan
<b>GoSS</b>	Government of South Sudan
<b>DShK</b>	Degtyaryov-Shpagin large-calibre machine gun
<b>HSBA</b>	Human Security Baseline Assessment
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>JEM</b>	Justice and Equality Movement
<b>JIU</b>	Joint Integrated Unit
<b>NCP</b>	National Congress Party
<b>NISS</b>	National Intelligence and Security Service
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PCP</b>	Popular Congress Party
<b>PDF</b>	Popular Defence Forces
<b>PK</b>	Pulemyot Kalashnikova machine gun
<b>RPG</b>	rocket-propelled grenade
<b>SAF</b>	Sudan Armed Forces
<b>SLA-AW</b>	Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid
<b>SLA-MM</b>	Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi
<b>SPLM/A</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
<b>SPLM-N</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
<b>SRF</b>	Sudanese Revolutionary Front

<b>SSLA</b>	South Sudan Liberation Army
<b>SSP</b>	Satellite Sentinel Project
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAMID</b>	African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNMISS</b>	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# I. Introduction and key findings

In early 2011, smouldering tensions between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) flared up again in Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile, two states bordering what was soon to become independent South Sudan. Since the 1980s, these states had been main theatres in the civil war between the central government in Khartoum and the SPLA. That conflict ended with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which cleared the way for a referendum on self-determination in the South, but not in the two border states.

By June 2011, large-scale conflict engulfed South Kordofan's Nuba Mountains area, later spreading to Blue Nile in September. Within just a few weeks, this 'new war' saw the mobilization of thousands of men and huge quantities of weapons and ammunition, air strikes, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. The new conflict pits Sudanese forces—the national army and paramilitaries—against the northern branch of the SPLM, including former members of the southern SPLA, and allied elements of the Darfur armed opposition.

This Working Paper describes the first year of renewed war (June 2011–July 2012) based on field research in South Kordofan and South Sudan in February and May 2012. It focuses on the conduct and dynamics of the current conflict and the primary armed actors, identifying shared weapons and ammunition holdings based on detailed accounts of materiel seized, as well as photographs and first-hand physical inspections.

While the war in South Kordofan is fundamentally a conflict between primarily (Northern) Sudanese actors for control of the state, it has clear cross-border implications—as SAF's air strikes in Unity state and the Southern fighters' temporary seizure of the Hejlil oil fields attest. This paper reviews these border aspects of the conflict and their impacts on relations between Khartoum and Juba.



Key findings include:

- The rebels appear to have made significant gains in the first year with some 30,000 Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) troops and allied forces capturing a large part of the Nuba Mountains area.
- The involvement of a relatively small contingent (700–1,000) of experienced Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) fighters was crucial to rebel victories.
- Prior to and just after Southern independence, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) sent thousands of ethnic Northern SPLA soldiers to South Kordofan fully armed with small arms, heavy weapons, and tanks, providing a significant source of fighters and weapons for the rebellion. In the post-independence period, however, the Small Arms Survey has found no evidence of weapons supplies from the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) to the SPLM-N, though some political and logistical support is evident.
- Rebel seizures of SAF weapons and vehicles between June 2011 and April 2012 provided their most valuable military resources, allowing SPLM-N to preserve its strength and making it less reliant on military supplies from outside the country.
- Much of the rebel arms and ammunition obtained through capture from SAF were of older vintage, mainly Soviet-type small arms, light weapons, and their ammunition originating from Bulgaria, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. Captured Sudanese and Chinese-made weapons and ammunition were more recently produced.
- SAF superiority in South Kordofan is limited to its control of the skies. As in its Darfur campaign, the use of adapted Antonov cargo planes and military aircraft for bombing has not led to military advances but has succeeded in terrorizing and displacing the local population.
- There is strong evidence that SAF has employed cluster bombs and incendiary weapons in South Kordofan. The presence of anti-personnel landmines in the stores captured from SAF, subsequently used by SPLM-N, was also documented, while reports on the use of chemical weapons during SAF offensives remain unverified.
- SPLM-N and JEM fighters are present on both sides of, and regularly cross, the border between South Kordofan and South Sudan's Unity state. They

have been also operating in areas of South Kordofan claimed by the GoSS, notably around Jaw, Hejlj, and Kharasana. But the Northern rebels are not proxies of South Sudan, as Khartoum asserts. Despite the important links between them, the SPLM-N has a distinct political and military agenda from that of the SPLA.

- Solving the North-South conflict will not be sufficient to solve the South Kordofan problem. The conflict in South Kordofan is, in the first place, an internal Sudanese issue rather than a mere ramification of North-South tensions. Even if South Sudan further severs its links to the SPLM-N, the war, with an increasingly national agenda, will continue to threaten both national and regional stability—just as the conflict in Darfur has survived the Chad–Sudan rapprochement.

*New War, Old Enemies* relies on extensive first-hand interviews with government officials from Sudan and South Sudan, rebel movement representatives, civilians from South Kordofan (both refugees and individuals living in SPLM-N controlled areas), and international actors. It draws on political, military, and human rights reporting on South Kordofan by non-governmental and international organizations, and the United Nations, as well as on documents provided by international researchers and journalists. Due to travel restrictions imposed on all areas under the Sudanese authority, field research in South Kordofan was limited to SPLM-N controlled areas. The authors' assessments of military equipment in the Nuba Mountains are based on first-hand inspections as well as photographs provided by relevant actors.

This report provides a snapshot of the situation in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan as of mid-2012. According to the information gathered since then, it appears that the context and the main trends of the conflict did not significantly change through the end of 2012. 📌

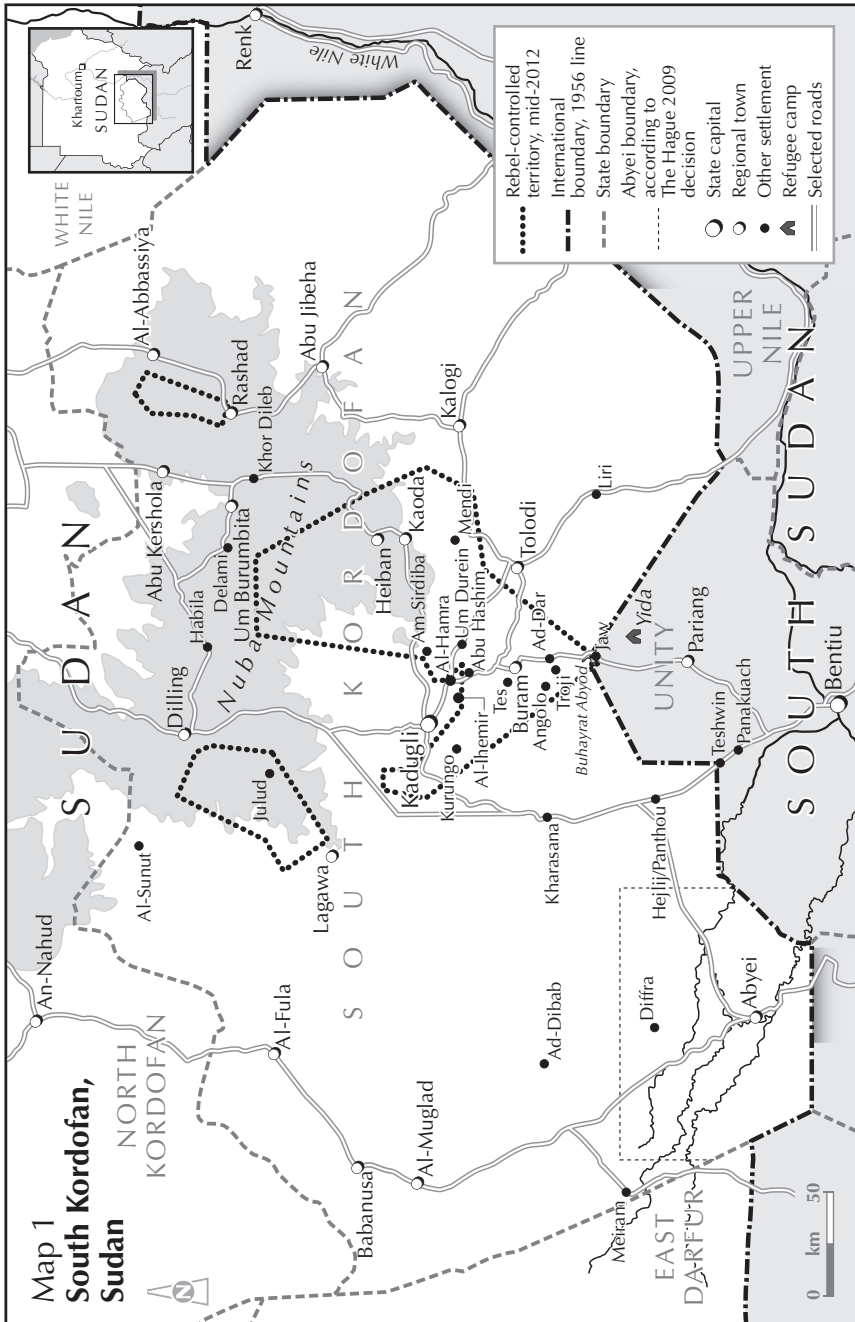
## II. The South Kordofan conflict and its roots

In June 2011, just one month before South Sudan became independent, war resumed in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan. The eruption of violence signaled the resumption of the 20-year civil war between the government in Khartoum and Northern elements of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). Founded and largely dominated by Southerners seeking independence from the North, the SPLM/A had succeeded, under the leadership of John Garang, in recruiting fighters in Sudan's most marginalized and peripheral regions, including areas outside the South, in particular South Kordofan.

### Pre-civil war era

South Kordofan is home to some 100 distinct non-Arab tribes, each with its own language and homelands, some limited to as small an area as one rocky mountain. They are collectively called 'Nuba' by outsiders. Since Sudan's independence in 1956, the Nuba have faced aggressive policies from the central government,<sup>1</sup> such as land-grabbing by investors in commercial farming, and attempts to supplant local cultures with the Arab-African culture of the northern Nile Valley.<sup>2</sup> Nuba intellectuals, who sought to confront this external aggression, had almost no representation in the centres of power. As a result, they were unable to counter the dominant post-colonial elite, who believed that Sudan needed to switch from subsistence agriculture to mechanized and commercial farming to become a modern state. Their political project also involved the homogenization of Sudan's many cultures. Unable to resist these policies peacefully, some young Nuba intellectuals drew closer to Garang's struggle to create a multid denominational, multiethnic state with an 'African' identity alongside the 'Arab' one.

The Nubas' campaign was a prototype for other efforts to combat marginalization or inequalities between the centre and the peripheries.<sup>3</sup> These persistent 'horizontal inequalities' are among the main causes of the chronic conflicts between



Sudan's peripheries and the centre. Despite repeated regime changes, political and economic power in Sudan has been concentrated since independence among the members of Arab or Arabized groups from the Nile Valley, north of Khartoum. This extreme centralization exacerbated other inequalities in the social and cultural domains. Garang's campaign for a united Sudan was built on opposition to this marginalization. As South Sudan gradually pushed harder for separatism, this claim began to echo ever more strongly in the peripheries of Sudan, in particular in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, as well as in Darfur. Persistent exploitation, going back to slave raids and land-grabbing before colonial times, explain the cyclical conflicts in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan, and show how past solutions have failed to recognize the fundamental causes (ICG, 2013, pp. 1–2).

Guma Kunda Komey, a Nuba land expert, said 'the encroachment of mechanized rain-fed farming into the customary Nuba farming land bringing socio-economic devastation [was] the single most important issue behind the extension of the civil war into the Nuba Mountains' (Kunda Komey, 2008a, p. 1003).<sup>4</sup> Coinciding with drought in the 1970s and 1980s, the agricultural schemes caused environmental degradation through soil erosion and reduced the amount of land available to farmers and pastoralists. This led to increased competition and, eventually, conflict between Arab pastoralists and Nuba farmers. The clashes were exacerbated by the introduction of modern firearms across the region (Musa Rahhal, 2001, p. 46; Kunda Komey, 2008b, p. 114).

## Civil war and CPA period

In 1984, just one year after its creation, Nuba leader Yousif Kuwa Mekki joined the SPLM/A. He recruited Nuba combatants and opened the Nuba Mountains to Southern rebels. The presence of the rebel front in the Nuba region—largely seen as an Africanist movement—made Arab nomad herders from the Missiriya and Hawazma tribes feel increasingly vulnerable. Successive governments fed on this fear, recruiting tribe members into militias called *murahilin* ('those of the migratory routes'). These militias were officially incorporated into the newly formed paramilitary Popular Defence Forces (PDF) after 1989 (Salmon, 2007). In an example of successive governments' 'counter-insurgency on the cheap'

tactics (de Waal, 2004), these militias were mobilized to fight against the SPLM/A in South Sudan, Nuba Mountains, and Blue Nile.<sup>5</sup> They were also encouraged to attack civilian villages whose residents were suspected—often simply on the basis of their non-Arab ethnicity—of supporting the rebels. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were eventually displaced from the Nuba Mountains area, with many pushed into so-called ‘peace camps’ in government areas. By 2002, the SPLM/A was almost defeated when the international community, led by the United States, denounced what it saw as a genocidal campaign against the Nuba, generating enough pressure for a ceasefire to be brokered in Switzerland (Flint, 2011, p. 22).

Gradually, the Nuba issue was eclipsed by the North-South conflict, especially during the negotiations in Kenya between the SPLM/A and Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP). The government refused to give South Kordofan and Blue Nile the right to self-determination, which the Southern-dominated SPLM was willing to accept if it got its own referenda on the South and Abyei (Kunda Komey, forthcoming; ICG, 2013, p. 6). South Kordofan and Blue Nile were addressed in a protocol signed in 2004, later incorporated into the 2005 CPA. But the compendium peace agreement failed to address the core issues of the conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The two states were instead assigned vaguely worded ‘popular consultations.’

Beyond the shortcomings of the CPA, the six-year interim period in South Kordofan was marked by the failure of all parties—the NCP, the SPLM, and the international community—to genuinely address the root causes of the war or implement CPA-mandated disarmament, land commissions, and popular consultations. The consultations were supposed to be overseen by the state’s legislative council, responsible for drafting the synthesis of public hearings. According to the CPA power-sharing arrangements, both the legislature and the executive were controlled by the NCP (55 per cent of the seats), with the SPLM holding the remaining 45 per cent, until elections took place concurrent with Sudan’s general elections in April 2010.<sup>6</sup> While votes took place on this date in all other states, legislative and gubernatorial elections in South Kordofan were repeatedly delayed,<sup>7</sup> finally taking place in May 2011—less than two months before South Sudan formally became independent. The gubernatorial elections saw NCP Governor Ahmed Mohammed Haroun, under indictment by

the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity allegedly committed while in charge of the Darfur file at the Ministry of Interior in 2003–05, stand against his SPLM deputy, Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, who succeeded Kuwa on his death in 2001 as the leader of the Nuba rebellion.<sup>8</sup>

The governor and his deputy had often been praised for working together, but both were gunning for victory. Haroun could not afford to lose because of his ICC indictment. The SPLM needed to win in order to be in a position to renegotiate what it perceived as the CPA's shortcomings on South Kordofan. According to official results, Haroun won with a margin of less than 1.5 per cent (Verjee, 2011b, p. 2). The result was deemed 'credible' by the Carter Center, the only international body to monitor the vote. A former expert from the same organization, however, disputed the result, pointing out that Haroun's margin of victory was five times smaller than the number of invalid ballots (Carter Center, 2011; Verjee, 2011b, p. 4). As for the legislative assembly, where the NCP obtained 33 seats to the SPLM's 21, analysts noted that the pro-SPLM Nuba Mountains constituencies were overpopulated in comparison to the pro-NCP constituencies (Verjee, 2011b, p. 2; Rottenburg et al., 2011, p. 11). Other analysts said the SPLM had failed to convince voters beyond its core constituency, which was itself increasingly frustrated with the CPA.

## Slide back to conflict

The elections were one direct cause of the resumption of conflict, but other factors contributed even more to rising tensions. The main one was the unresolved status of Nuba SPLA combatants. Under the CPA, all former rebel fighters were to withdraw to South Sudan, except for some 3,300 incorporated into the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), which included an equal number of SAF. Between 2007 and 2008, a large contingent from the SPLA's South Kordofan 9th Division—between 17,000 and 30,000 men, according to SPLM/A officials, or between 10,000 to slightly above 20,000, according to Western military observers—redeployed to Jaw, at the northern tip of Unity state, which borders South Kordofan.<sup>9</sup>

But several thousand other (non-JIU) SPLA remained in South Kordofan, and members of the redeployed 9th Division started to return from Jaw beginning in January 2011, with their individual weapons. These movements increased during

the election campaign in April (Small Arms Survey, 2008, pp. 1, 10; Verjee, 2011a, p. 2).<sup>10</sup> In January and February, the SPLM/A moved some heavy artillery northwards. Initial reports suggested this was to enable them to fight near the border, but these weapons were used later by the SPLM-N to hold territory in the Nuba Mountains.<sup>11</sup>

In April 2011, during negotiations with the Sudanese government in Kuriftu, Ethiopia, the SPLM-N asked to transfer or retransfer north its soldiers from South Kordofan and Blue Nile based in Jaw and various other parts of South Sudan, before being integrated into SAF. The mediators of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) also proposed transferring north the Jaw soldiers in order to integrate them. Khartoum rejected the idea, signing instead a deal with Daniel Kodi, former deputy governor of South Kordofan and representing the SPLM-N, in which even the SPLA-JIUs had to withdraw to South Sudan by 9 April 2011 (while the CPA had scheduled their dissolution for January 2012).<sup>12</sup> Arguing they had not been consulted by Kodi, SPLM-N leaders Malik Agar and Abdel-Aziz al Hilu reneged on the deal.<sup>13</sup> On 23 May 2011, after the elections and the reoccupation of the disputed Abyei enclave at the border between South Kordofan and South Sudan (Craze, 2011), SAF demanded that the SPLA withdraw all its forces out of South Kordofan, including those in the JIUs, by 1 June (mostly fighters originally from South Kordofan).

The Sudanese security forces began disarming SPLA joint integrated police units on the day the ultimatum expired. Tensions quickly escalated and the first bullets were reportedly fired on 5 June in Um Durein, southeast of Kadugli, when SAF and SPLA-JIUs clashed after an SPLA soldier refused to disarm at a checkpoint. Later that day, Sudan's paramilitary Central Reserve Police (CRP) and PDF skirmished with SPLA-JIUs in Tolodi, south-east of the Nuba Mountains. Large-scale fighting finally broke out in Kadugli on 6 June, when SAF units attacked Abdel-Aziz's house. He had fled the day before to the nearby Kurungo mountains with the most influential South Kordofan SPLM officials. That same day (6 June), SPLA ambushed paramilitary forces in Um Durein reportedly tasked with reinforcing SAF. The government launched retaliatory attacks against villages in eastern Kadugli, including Abu Hashim. On 7–8 June, the fighting spread to parts of the Nuba Mountains, including Dilling, Heiban, Buram, Troji, Tolodi, Khor Dileb, and Julud. It took the government some ten days to regain control of Kadugli (Small Arms Survey, 2012e, p. 1).<sup>14</sup>



## Box 1 **Chronology of main events in South Kordofan conflict, 2011–12**

2011	
April	Start of the progressive build-up of governmental military presence in South Kordofan.
5 May	Legislative and gubernatorial elections in South Kordofan. NCP's Haroun reappointed state governor.
23 May	SAF chief of staff ask SPLA chief of staff in Juba to withdraw all forces from South Kordofan by 1 June.
1 June	First attempts by Sudanese security forces to forcibly disarm SPLA joint integrated police units.
5 June	Significant clash between SAF and SPLA-JIU soldiers in Um Durein, south-east of the state capital Kadugli, and in Tolodi, south-east of the Nuba Mountains.
6 June	Outbreak of large-scale fighting in Kadugli and SAF attack on SPLM-N leader Abdel-Aziz al Hilu's house.
7–8 June	Fighting spreads to different parts of Nuba Mountains, including Dilling, Heiban, Buram, Troji, Tolodi, Khor Dileb, and Julud.
28 June	SPLM-N Chairman Malik Agar and NCP Co-Deputy Chairman Nafie Ali Nafie sign a framework agreement for peace in Addis Ababa. Sudan's President Omar al Bashir subsequently reneged on the deal.
30 June – 1 July	SAF defeated in al Hamra, in the Kadugli area. SPLM-N record first significant capture of military equipment. Military operations around Tess on the same dates.
9 July	Proclamation of the independence of the Republic of South Sudan.
11 July	First engagement of JEM and SPLM-N elements in joint military operations, in Tess.
August	SPLM-N and JEM forces record a victory in al Ithemir.
1–2 September	Fighting between SAF and SPLM-N starts in Blue Nile state.
End of October	Unsuccessful attempts by SPLM-N to take Tolodi.
12 November	Creation of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), an opposition platform including SPLM-N, the main armed movements from Darfur, and factions of the political opposition.
November	SAF and affiliated militias deploy in Jaw, along the disputed border. South Sudan's 4th Division and SPLM-N's 9th Division are positioned a few miles to the south and are later joined by JEM fighters. SAF units seize neighbouring Troji, in the strategic southernmost foothills of the Nuba Mountains.

2012	
15 January	SRF forces repel SAF attack at al Ithemir.
22 January	Clashes in al Dar. SPLM-N take control by the end of February.
10 February	Sudan and South Sudan sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Non-Aggression and Cooperation in Addis Ababa.
12 February	SAF carry out air strikes on SPLM-N and South Sudan army positions in Jaw, at the border between South Kordofan and Unity states.
26 February	South Sudan army and SRF units (SPLM-N and JEM) expel SAF from Jaw. SPLM-N forces retake Troji.
26–29 March, 4 April	Skirmishes between South Sudan army, SAF, and paramilitary groups in Panakuach and Teshwin areas, at the border between Unity and South Kordofan. First pushes of the SPLA toward Hejlilj oil fields.
Early April	Second unsuccessful wave of SPLM-N attacks on Tolodi.
10 April	South Sudan army and JEM attack Hejlilj and Kilo 23.
10–20 April	South Sudan's forces occupy Hejlilj and oil facilities.
15–23 April	SAF carry out air strikes on Rubkona and Bentiu, in South Sudan's Unity state.
19–20 April	South Sudan's forces temporarily occupy Kilo 23, reportedly the base for Khartoum-backed Nuer militias, between Hejlilj and Kharasana.
27 September	In Addis Ababa, Sudan and South Sudan sign a set of agreements containing, inter alia, security arrangements related to the demilitarization of border areas. By March 2013, the deal remains unimplemented.
4 October	SRF presents its political agenda in the 'Restructuring of Sudanese State' document, in Kampala (Uganda).
October	SPLM-N launches mortar attacks against Kadugli, causing civilian casualties.
December	SPLM-N defeats SAF in Deldeko and Roseires north-east of Kadugli, reportedly capturing four or five tanks.

## A new war in the Nuba Mountains

Since June 2011, some of the most important battles have taken place around Kadugli, for example in al Hamra, al Ithemir, and Tess, south-east of the city, as well as Deldeko and Roseires north-east of it. Sudanese forces repeatedly attempted, without much success, to push SPLM-N away from the state capital. Between

October 2011 and May 2012, the government also launched a number of attacks aimed at cutting the strategic road between the Nuba Mountains and Jaw, but SPLM-N fighters retook SAF positions in Jaw and Troji in February 2012. They also repelled an attack on Angolo in May 2012 (Small Arms Survey, 2012e, p. 1).<sup>15</sup>

During the first year of the war, rebel forces were able to contain most dry season offensives, in particular from Kadugli and Kharasana. They did not, however, succeed in seizing control of major towns—the SPLM-N only holds Buram and Heiban—or expanding the conflict to lowland areas. In particular, the SPLM-N failed to capture Tolodi, one of its main targets and a strategic location that would allow fighters to secure an eastern route to South Sudan (Small Arms Survey, 2012e, p. 2).

After the rainy season and the resulting slowdown of military activities<sup>16</sup> from June to August 2012, large-scale operations and clashes between the government and rebel elements resumed towards the end of August, with intense fighting between SPLM-N and SAF units in several areas.<sup>17</sup> These continued until December 2012, although the frontlines established before the rainy season do not appear to have changed significantly (see Box 2 and Map). Significant clashes also took place north-east of Kadugli early in August, involving SPLM-N and JEM units (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012f; Radio Dabanga, 2012b; 2012c).

In October 2012, SPLM-N launched unprecedented mortar attacks on Kadugli. The first attack, on 8 October, hit the central market, a school, a radio station, the local PDF headquarters, and facilities belonging to UNICEF. The government said four women and two girls were killed, with 19 others, including 10 children, injured (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012g; 2012h; 2012i; Radio Dabanga, 2012d). SPLM-N said the targets were all military (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012g). The international community, including the United Nations, condemned the attack.<sup>18</sup> A second attack, on 23 October, against Um Sha'ran, al Ithemir, and Roseires security checkpoints killed two children and injured eight adult civilians, according to SAF. SPLM-N Secretary-General Yasir Arman said the operation was 'self-defence' aimed at preventing an expected summer offensive (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012j).

In December 2012, the SPLM-N defeated SAF in Deldeko and Roseires north-east of Kadugli, reportedly capturing four or five and destroying one or two T-55 tanks of the government force (Small Arms Survey, 2013). This would have

thus brought the number of functioning tanks held by the SPLM-N to twelve, the remaining being part of pre-war stocks or captured in other locations, and two APCs—captured in the same December battles.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the rebels' failures to hold major towns and lowland areas, the military balance in the Nuba Mountains after a year of war appears to favour the SPLM-N (see Box 2 and Map). Many observers say the rebels know the territory better, are highly motivated, and have better training than the SAF-affiliated militias. Although the rebel fighters' weapons are inferior, especially given SAF's ability to resupply troops and their uncontested airpower, the SPLM-N has been successful in capturing SAF equipment and vehicles. The field research conducted for this report found that, beginning in June 2011, the SPLM-N seized significant quantities of small calibre ammunition, mortar bombs, anti-tank rockets, and shells, as well as weapons, including grenade launchers, mortars, canons, and T-55 tanks (for details on more recent captures, see Small Arms Survey, 2013). The rebels were able to regularly reinforce their military means, using SAF as an effective, although unwilling, supplier.

### Box 2 **Dug in: SPLM-N areas of control**

June 2011 was decisive for the SPLM-N, which quickly secured control over more territory in the Nuba Mountains than it had during the civil war era (Small Arms Survey, 2012e, p. 1). The frontlines, while blurry, do not appear to have fluctuated much since then. The main SPLM-N-controlled area covers the southern Nuba Mountains, south to Jaw, including a strategic route from South Sudan. This territory also includes the traditional SPLA stronghold of Kaoda, as well as Buram, Um Durein, and Heiban, almost encircles government-controlled Kadugli, and nearly reaches Tolodi, the other major government garrison town that the SPLM-N failed to take. The SPLM-N also established its authority across an enclave around Julud in the north-west, between the government-controlled towns of Lagawa, Dilling, and al Sunut. It controls another smaller enclave close to Rashad, between Khor Dileb and al Abbasiya—an area where the SPLA was unable to operate during the civil war.

The rebels also operate in a pocket south of Kalogi, and south-east of Jebel Liri (where the government has a garrison), and this region provides strategic access to an alternative route between the Nuba Mountains and South Sudan. SPLM-N claim to control smaller pockets in the west of the state through recruits from the Missiriya, the dominant tribe of the area. Some of these areas, however, are best described as battlegrounds rather than areas of rebel control. Of major importance, the government has held onto a strategic road connecting El Obeid, North Kordofan's capital, to Kadugli.

## *Humanitarian impacts*

The resumption of fighting has had a devastating impact on civilians. According to sources linked to the SPLM-N, by mid-December 2012, some 736,000 'vulnerable' people within the Nuba Mountains' so-called 'liberated areas' were in urgent need of relief (SRRRA, 2012). Around 436,000 of these had been displaced within rebel-held areas. The government, which has no real access to rebel areas, put the number of displaced at 42,150 (OCHA, 2012).<sup>20</sup> The SPLM-N sources estimated the entire population of SPLM-N-controlled areas in South Kordofan at 995,000 people, all 'affected' by the conflict.<sup>21</sup> In July 2012, the World Food Programme said 179,000 people were affected by the conflict in government-held areas, while the Sudanese government's Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) put the figure at 207,000.<sup>22</sup> Although exact figures are not available, thousands of civilians have reportedly moved into government-controlled areas to escape violence and hunger. The HAC says around half of the 207,000 affected people came from 'behind enemy lines' (OCHA, 2012). In addition, the UN's refugee agency, UNHCR, said that by October 2012 some 65,000 refugees from South Kordofan had moved to a displaced persons' camp at Yida, and to two other smaller camps in South Sudan.<sup>23</sup>

Continued, indiscriminate SAF air strikes in the Nuba Mountains appear to be one of the main causes of displacement and food insecurity. In addition to the direct consequences, including the killing and maiming of several hundred civilians (see Section V, below),<sup>24</sup> hundreds of thousands of people were too scared to tend to their farms, which drastically reduced food stocks. Access to food was one of the major challenges for civilians, driving many to depend on wild plants to survive. The humanitarian crisis has been made worse by the limited scope of relief programmes, which are run by a handful of local organizations that receive support from international NGOs in defiance of Khartoum's refusal to authorize humanitarian access to rebel-controlled areas.

On 3 August 2012, Khartoum signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations, African Union, and Arab League to guarantee access to South Kordofan's rebel-controlled areas. However, the government clearly will not accept any loss of sovereignty over the Nuba Mountains, meaning humanitarian access will remain dependent on Khartoum's good will.<sup>25</sup>

## *Failure of political negotiations*

By February 2012, political negotiations, which had increasingly merged with humanitarian access talks, had not succeeded. Initially, between June and September 2011, the SPLM-N was caught between two currents: while its South Kordofan branch, under Abdel-Aziz, was fighting, its Blue Nile section, led by Chairman Malik Agar, was still part of the legal political opposition and negotiating on behalf of the whole SPLM-N. During this period, Khartoum and the AUHIP, led by former South African president Thabo Mbeki, sought to prevent the spread of the war to Blue Nile. Abdel-Aziz said: '[President] Mbeki was trying to divide us, to isolate the Nuba and to bring Malik into negotiations. Finally, we managed to convince Malik he had to fight as well.'<sup>26</sup> On 28 June 2011, however, Malik and NCP Co-Deputy Chairman Nafie Ali Nafie signed a framework agreement in Addis Ababa. Bashir reneged on the deal a few days later, reportedly because of pressure from military hardliners.<sup>27</sup> Attempts to save the agreement, notably by late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, proved unsuccessful and, with the SPLM-N now declared illegal in Sudan, the war spread to Blue Nile. On 1 September, after an incident similar to the one that had started the war in South Kordofan,<sup>28</sup> government and SPLM-N forces started to fight all over Blue Nile.

Since then, Khartoum's policy seems to have been driven largely by the most radical wing of the military and political elite, favouring military options over any concessions to the SPLM-N. The virtual exclusion of South Kordofan and Blue Nile from the major round of talks in Addis Ababa, in September 2012, seems to confirm this. The only notable talks between SPLM-N and the Government of Sudan (GoS) during these negotiations were two informal, hour-long, and apparently friendly conversations between SPLM-N leader Yasir Arman and South Kordofan governor Ahmed Haroun in the lobby of Addis Ababa's Sheraton Hotel. The GoS reportedly blamed Governor Haroun—a hawk during the first war, he is now seen as a dove who favours a negotiated, power-sharing solution to the whole South Kordofan issue. But his voice is not the most powerful in Khartoum.<sup>29</sup>

The AUHIP report to the AU Peace and Security Council of 25 January 2013 again addressed South Kordofan and Blue Nile, in addition to the North-South

conflict that is the main focus of the AU mediation. Noting the failure of the tripartite mechanism, it noted that, if either of the parties persists in denying assistance, the AU would not discourage cross-border aid from South Sudan to SPLM-N controlled areas. It also reiterated that the conflict would not be solved without a national solution: 'inclusive national political arrangements, which will remove grievances that fuel Sudan's crises' (AUHIP, 2013).

### *Human rights violations*

During this new phase of the conflict, there have also been numerous reports of human rights violations, including mass arrests of Nuba civilians, forced displacement of hundreds of people, arbitrary executions, and cases of rape and sexual violence perpetrated by Khartoum-backed militias as well as ordinary security forces.<sup>30</sup> At the beginning of the conflict, in particular, civilians and civilian areas considered to be pro-rebel—reportedly on the basis of ethnicity or election results—were allegedly targeted in a systematic manner.<sup>31</sup> During the whole month of June 2011, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)—deployed to accompany the CPA implementation—was present in South Kordofan, although already preparing to withdraw when South Sudan declared independence on 9 July. Khartoum put pressure on UNMIS to speed up its departure and refrain from interfering in 'internal' issues. As a result, former UNMIS staff members, international observers, and SPLM-N officials agree that the peacekeeping force was particularly inactive, serving only to bear witness to the outbreak of the violence (Rottenburg et al., 2011, p. 10). 📄

### III. Armed actors

#### Sudanese forces

##### SAF

After the local elections, SAF deployed additional troops in South Kordofan to support the five divisions permanently based in Abu Jibeha, Abyei, Dilling, Kadugli, and Liri. Between April and June 2011, more government forces, including several battalions of the CRP (*al ihtiyati al markazi*) from various parts of Sudan, reached Kadugli,<sup>32</sup> adding to the 12,000-strong SAF already present before the ballot, according to SPLM-N sources.<sup>33</sup> On 4–5 June, SAF also reportedly transferred 12 or 13 tanks and additional equipment from El Obeid to South Kordofan. Three of these were finally deployed in Dilling, while the others were positioned in Kadugli. According to a National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) defector, SAF numbered some 34,000 troops in South Kordofan in 2012, excluding the Abyei and Hejlil areas.<sup>34</sup>

According to information gathered in South Kordofan, including from Nuba SAF defectors who joined the rebellion early in the conflict, many of the newly deployed forces were recently conscripted—sometimes forcibly—and given only very basic training in Khartoum and elsewhere before being transferred to South Kordofan.<sup>35</sup> Many were allegedly recruited from among Islamist circles in universities and religious groups in Khartoum. Others were former South Sudanese SAF soldiers who had retired but were forced to rejoin the army to protect their retirement status and rights. Witnesses interviewed in South Kordofan in May 2012 said forced conscription by SAF was significant in the first stage of the war. A SAF defector, who allegedly witnessed forced conscription, said the equivalent of at least eight platoons, or around 250 men, were recruited in Abu Jibeha in June 2011, mainly from among Nuba students.<sup>36</sup> New recruits were trained for 45 days before they were integrated into operational units. The same defector said these recruits had to serve for at least two years and were



paid 45 Sudanese pounds (SDG—USD 17 at the time) a month.<sup>37</sup> There are also unverified reports of combatants from further afield, including fighters from once Khartoum-supported Chadian rebel groups (notably the Missiriya-dominated Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement–UFDD-Fondamentale) previously operating in Darfur (Tubiana, 2011, p. 70).

The diverse composition of Sudan's army might explain why government troops fared so badly in the early days of the conflict: some soldiers were ideologically motivated but poorly trained, while others had more military experience but little motivation. This reflects the challenges facing Khartoum as it seeks to recruit skilled soldiers to send to conflict zones. SAF's previous policy of relying on troops from Southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and Darfur<sup>38</sup> is no longer viable as all three are now frontline regions whose communities increasingly tend to believe they are facing the same problems.<sup>39</sup>

### *Paramilitaries*

Prior to the renewal of conflict in South Kordofan, and mindful of the need to maintain a significant military presence in Darfur, the government reactivated paramilitary forces that fought on its side during the civil war. These included the PDF as well as Islamist militias known as *mujahideen*. The *mujahideen* are drawn almost exclusively from the Islamist circles of Khartoum and Northern Sudan, in particular those in universities and administrative structures. The recruits take part in what they consider to be a religious war (*jihad*) against non-Muslims and apostates (thus *mujahideen* were not mobilized in Darfur, a unanimously Muslim area).<sup>40</sup>

The *mujahideen* appear to operate under SAF command although they are not fully integrated into the SAF structure. They maintain their civilian status and are not paid. Even if they are reportedly well equipped and receive better support from Khartoum than local militias, their military skills are not necessarily suited to the Nuba Mountains. Official figures are not available, but an NISS defector said six brigades of *mujahideen*, under different labels, were deployed in South Kordofan in early 2012.<sup>41</sup> Other unconfirmed reports suggest that the equivalent of a division—around 3,000 fighters—has been recruited annually over recent years. *Mujahideen* groups reportedly fought, with limited success, in many of the most significant early battles of the new war.<sup>42</sup>

The resumption of fighting also saw the reactivation of several local militias, generally referred to as PDF and recruited along tribal lines, essentially from the Hawazma and Missiriya Arab tribes and, to a lesser extent, Nuba communities. These groups were reactivated in several parts of South Kordofan, including Kadugli, Tolodi, and Abu Jibeha, reportedly under the supervision of pro-NCP traditional and political leaders, as well as SAF and military intelligence officers like Mohamed Ibrahim, described as the operational commander of Hawazma PDF.<sup>43</sup>

The main PDF leaders in South Kordofan include:

- Nuba: Kafi Tayara, the best-known pro-GoS Nuba leader. Although not from a traditional dynasty, he was made the official chief of his Shatt tribe by the government during the first war, with the title of *amir*, or prince. He is also an *amir al-mujahideen*, as PDF leaders fighting in the Nuba Mountains or South Sudan have often been called.
- Hawazma branch: Daoud Ahmed, PDF coordinator for the Awlad Mahma sub-group of the Hawazma, and Taour al Mamoun, PDF coordinator for Kadugli county since the first war.
- Missiriya branch: Sadiq Merida, Daoud Horgaz, and Issa Abdelmula—all from the Ajayra sub-group; Ali Ismail from the Falayta sub-group. The Missiriya PDF are coordinated by retired SAF Brig. Gen. Bandar al Balula, from the Falayta, who reports to Issa Bashari Mohamed, the federal minister of science and technology, and the most powerful Missiriya politician in Khartoum.<sup>44</sup>

As in the past, SAF provided simple training and basic military equipment to these new militias.<sup>45</sup> A SAF defector, who left the army in September 2011, said that, in Abu Jibeha, 500 new AKM-type assault rifles,<sup>46</sup> still in their original plastic wrappings, were distributed in early June 2011 to local PDF commanders and traditional leaders from three sub-groups of the Hawazma. (Other sub-groups, such as the Awlad Kinana, who were seen to be close to the Nuba or known to have some individual members of the SPLM-N, as well as the Nuba themselves, were considered untrustworthy.) These weapons—delivered by trucks to Abu Jibeha from Khartoum through SAF 14th Division headquarters in Kadugli—were destined for new recruits only, because those who had fought in the civil war still had their own weapons.

Boxes of 7.62×39 mm and 7.62×54R mm ammunition, originating from a SAF internal delivery, were also distributed.<sup>47</sup> According to SPLM-N officers interviewed in South Kordofan, another batch of 500 rifles and ammunition was distributed to mostly Hawazma PDF under Taour al Mamoun in Kadugli as early as 3 June 2011.<sup>48</sup> Hawazma SPLM-N officers said the Hawazma PDF, under Mohamed Ibrahim's command, also received machine guns (PK and DShK types) and RPG launchers.<sup>49</sup>

A Missiriya SPLM-N officer, interviewed in May 2012, said his tribe's PDF were made up of 300 to 400 men. However, few of the actors interviewed for this report were able to provide a thorough estimate of the overall size of the PDF.<sup>50</sup> It seems, however, that PDF numbers in South Kordofan increased after the CPA was signed and after fighting resumed, rising from 12,000 to more than 20,000 (Small Arms Survey, 2008, p. 7; 2011a, p. 4).

Figures for the overall government forces (including SAF, CRP, PDF and other paramilitaries) range from 40,000 to 70,000 (Small Arms Survey, 2012b, p. 3; ICG, 2013, p. 20).

## Armed opposition forces

### *SPLM-North*

In early June 2011, the fighters of the SPLA's 9th Division<sup>51</sup> were scattered between their main post-CPA base in Jaw and the Nuba Mountains. According to SPLM-N Deputy Chairman Abdel-Aziz al Hilu and Maj. Gen. Jagod Mukwar (SPLM-N's commander for the Nuba Mountains),<sup>52</sup> SPLM in South Kordofan then had 22,000 men—3,300 in the JIUs, and 1,500 in the joint integrated police, both in South Kordofan itself; 13,500 men around Jaw; and the remaining 3,500 in the Bentiu region.<sup>53</sup> The size of the force redeployed to Jaw is disputed, with estimates for the whole Nuba forces put at 20,000–30,000 as early as June 2011.<sup>54</sup> When the conflict resumed, however, the majority of those who had left the ranks rejoined. The Nuba fighters still in Jaw and Bentiu (including some 500 integrated into the SPLA-South 5th Division), or part of other SPLA divisions in South Sudan, upwards of 2,000 men (including 1,000 in Western Bahr al Ghazal and 500 in Upper Nile), were progressively repatriated. Since South Sudan's independence, Northern members of the SPLA's Southern divisions—

including Nuba soldiers who never fought in South Kordofan during the civil war—have been moving constantly to the SPLM-N, with the encouragement of the SPLA leadership.<sup>55</sup> Voluntary recruitment campaigns were also conducted, especially in the early stages of the conflict, and some newly enrolled fighters were trained as late as May 2012. By the end of June 2011, the force in South Kordofan was around 30,000–35,000 men.<sup>56</sup>

SPLM-N officers acknowledge that the force is largely composed of Nuba tribesmen, although other tribes are also represented. The most significant non-Nuba component is made of Missiriya recruits, numbering 1,000 men by mid-2012, and deployed in four different battalions under the command of Brig. Gen. Yassin al Mullah and Lt. Col. Bokora Mohamed Fadel.<sup>57</sup> This Missiriya presence is not unprecedented, as around 35 Missiriya fighters joined the SPLM/A in the late 1980s.<sup>58</sup> From the CPA signature in 2005 onwards, however, SPLM Missiriya leaders conducted broad sensitization and recruitment campaigns, taking advantage of the feeling of marginalization created by Khartoum’s policies. This campaign consolidated the tribe’s presence and gained support among traditional leaders and the population.<sup>59</sup>

Missiriya combatants reportedly took part in several major battles, particularly in their area of south-western Kordofan—in Diffra (Defra), north of Abyei Town, in July 2011; in Meiram in August–September; in the Hejlj and Kharasana areas in March–April 2012, often alongside of JEM troops. They also fought in Jaw in February 2012 and in the Nuba Mountains, including in Tess in July 2011, and Tolodi in October 2011 and April 2012 alongside SPLM-N Nuba combatants.<sup>60</sup> They also captured military equipment from SAF stockpiles.

In addition to the Missiriya, other Arab tribes from South Kordofan, particularly the Hawazma, are also represented in the SPLM-N, although the numbers are smaller. A handful of Hawazma officers joined the SPLM/A at the end of the 1990s, while others were recruited during the interim period and, reportedly, even more at the beginning of the new war. According to a Hawazma political leader from the government side, some 300 to 400 Hawazma men have joined the SPLM-N since June 2011, including civilians but also former SAF officers.<sup>61</sup> Although the number of Hawazma fighters remains limited, Hawazma leaders from both the SPLM-N and the government side said in interviews in May and September 2012 that their kinsmen have lost faith in Khartoum since the end of the civil war, with only a minority still supporting the government.<sup>62</sup>

## JEM

Although numerically far inferior to the SPLM-N, JEM has provided crucial support to rebels in South Kordofan and its involvement has proved decisive in key battles. JEM started to recruit clandestinely in South Kordofan during the civil war, among both Missiriya and Nuba, in particular Islamist students who sided with Hassan al Turabi after his 1999 split with Bashir. After the Nuba ceasefire of 2002, JEM slowed its expansion in South Kordofan, in particular in the Nuba Mountains—but the movement remained active within the Missiriya. Those locals who had remained with JEM often went to Darfur, or remained underground in secret cells. After the outbreak of the new war in the Nuba Mountains in June 2011, JEM reactivated in South Kordofan, including within the Nuba Mountains. As early as 29–30 June, a JEM delegation led by At Tom Hamid Tutu, a Nuba Islamist who had been deputy secretary of Turabi's Popular Congress Party (PCP) in South Kordofan, travelled to the Nuba Mountains and met with Abdel-Aziz to coordinate military operations in the area.<sup>63</sup>

JEM combatants have fought alongside the SPLM-N since the early stages of the new conflict. On 11 July 2011, a small JEM unit, composed of 50 mostly Nuba men and two technical vehicles, under the leadership of At Tom Tutu and Hassan Issa Ramadan, fought in Tess alongside a small number of SPLM-N troops. At Tom was arrested after his vehicle was destroyed—an event that did not help to convince the SPLM-N to adopt JEM tactics.<sup>64</sup> He was replaced as JEM field commander in the Nuba Mountains by Col. Mohammed Sherif Adam Shatta, a Borgo from South Kordofan. From that point, coordination with SPLM-N improved, notably during the next battle in al Ithemir in August.<sup>65</sup>

Taking advantage of its presence among both Missiriya and Nuba since 2002, JEM's force in South Kordofan progressively grew, reaching its current size of 700–1,000 men, including 300–400 reportedly from the Missiriya tribe. The force, which now maintains some 120 vehicles,<sup>66</sup> is commanded by Fadel Mohamed Rahoma, JEM's second deputy to the general commander and its top Missiriya leader. According to JEM officers interviewed in February and May 2012, most of their South Kordofan troops are deployed in the Missiriya area in the west.

JEM fighters took part in several battles alongside the SPLM-N in the Missiriya area of western Kordofan, in Jaw, and in the Nuba Mountains.<sup>67</sup> JEM fighters generally operated as a kind of cavalry, employing the mobile fighting tactics

the movement has used in Darfur. This way of fighting was very useful in joint raids, in particular in Jaw, but the SPLM-N is still reluctant to fully adopt JEM tactics.<sup>68</sup> On the contrary, JEM officers say South Sudan's army (alongside which they fought in both Jaw and Hejlj) has, since 2010, increasingly been using technicals, part of JEM's basic equipment. One of the army's leaders in the Hejlj raid said all army cars used during the attack were 'cut'—cutting the hard-top off the front cabin allowing more shooting while in motion.<sup>69</sup> JEM also fought on its own in the western part of South Kordofan, most recently in Meiram in July 2012, and in al Muglad in September and October 2012.<sup>70</sup>

During the first year of the war, JEM increased its military force in South Kordofan by recruiting local young graduates, some from Turabi's Islamic Students Association, and a number of officers who previously served in the SPLM-N. It also captured a significant volume of SAF equipment, especially light infantry weapons and ammunition, as well as technicals.<sup>71</sup> JEM's South Kordofan forces, increasingly led by local Missiriya and Nuba elements, are acting more and more as a second local force. Links with the original force in north-western Darfur do exist, and Darfurians are present among JEM fighters in South Kordofan, but movement between both areas has proved increasingly risky, as shown by the killing of JEM's first chairman, Khalil Ibrahim, reportedly during an Antonov bombing at night as he moved from Darfur to South Kordofan in December 2011.<sup>72</sup>

## *SRF*

The SRF is an umbrella created in November 2011 and composed of SPLM-N, the main Darfurian armed movements—JEM, Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW), and SLA-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM)—and a few dissidents from opposition parties, including the Democratic Unionist Party and National Umma Party. Its aim is to unify the disparate political and armed opposition and trigger the fall of the government. The SRF initially struggled to overcome ideological differences among its members and establish a balanced internal hierarchy and coordinate actions, but slowly the coalition gained political recognition, both internally and internationally.<sup>73</sup>

On 4 October 2012, the political leadership—under the presidency of SPLM-N Chairman Malik Agar<sup>74</sup>—officially presented its political agenda in a document

entitled 'Re-structuring of the Sudanese State' (SRF, 2012). It details the SRF's principal goals, including:

- A transitional 'government of national unity' drawn from the SRF, other political parties, and civil society;
- The establishment of a decentralized and federal administration 'where all powers (except those of sovereign nature) are delegated to the regions,' and the extension of the 'principle of voluntary unity' to all Sudan's regions—a proposal that could allow the Nuba to exert self-determination;
- The drafting of 'a constitution based on the separation of state and religion.' JEM was initially against this secular stance, and this delayed its entry into the Kaoda Alliance, as the SRF was initially called. Among the non-armed opposition, Turabi's PCP and Sadiq al Mahdi's Umma Party are opposed to such secularism;
- Balanced foreign relations 'between the African and Arab worlds.'

The document also says a transitional period of six years will be needed for Sudan to enter a new constitutional era. During this period, the SRF wants the country to be ruled by a government of national unity, drawn from the SRF, other political parties, and civil society organizations.

The manifesto lays strong emphasis on 'marginalized' areas, including South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Darfur, and Eastern Sudan, but also areas in Northern Sudan that have been affected by dam projects and commercial agricultural schemes—both types of development have led to the removal of inhabitants from their lands without compensation and often with few benefits going to the local communities. Some recommendations are particularly relevant to Darfur, such as the call for the restoration of the '*hawakir*' land tenure system. More broadly, the SRF recommends 'distribution of power and wealth on the basis of the population average for each region,' as well as affirmative action policies to support the most conflict-ridden and marginalized regions in terms of development, education, and integration into civil service and armed forces. It proposes the dissolution of the NISS, and the suppression of the National Security Law and the state of emergency. To achieve these aims, the SRF says it will combine peaceful popular uprisings with armed rebellion, carry out peaceful demonstrations, strikes, and civil disobedience, and encourage defections.

On 5 January 2013, in Kampala, the SRF signed a 'New Dawn Charter' with representatives of the National Consensus Forces (NCF), the coalition of the main opposition parties and some civil society groups. Very similar to the SRF program, the charter advocates a four-year 'transitional government of national unity' that should be obtained through a combination of 'peaceful civil work' and 'revolutionary armed struggle' (SudanJEM.com, 2013).<sup>75</sup> It also calls for a redistribution of power and wealth according to the demographics, and for a secular constitution.<sup>76</sup> Regarding military issues, the document advocates the dissolution of all paramilitary forces and the integration of SRF troops into SAF. The charter commits to peaceful relations with South Sudan, ultimately aiming at reunifying the two countries.

The coalition's military chain of command reflects the political hierarchy, with SPLM-N's Abdel-Aziz serving as head of the joint military command and JEM, SLA-AW, and SLA-MM officers acting as his deputies, respectively in charge of operations, administration, and logistics. On the battlefield, JEM and the SPLM-N appear to have effective cooperation and coordination within the SRF despite their originally differing ideologies. They make good use of their different but potentially complementary tactics.<sup>77</sup> While a significant portion of the Nuba Mountains is under SPLM-N's authority, with the rebels repelling attacks by SAF and affiliated militias, JEM units in South Kordofan seem to have been able to operate in the lowlands, as they did after the SPLA incursion to Hejlij. Then, they pushed further north to Kilo 23, and on to Kharasana before voluntarily withdrawing. SLA-MM and SLA-AW did not deploy fighters to South Kordofan, choosing to focus on their traditional areas of support in Darfur, and keep Khartoum forces engaged on that front.<sup>78</sup>

For now, the possibility seems quite remote that SRF fighters could launch a major military offensive to overthrow the regime in Khartoum. However, the group's creation provided an opening for a holistic, national approach to the different conflicts in Sudan. Delivering on either violent regime change or peaceful national transition will equally depend on the capacities of the coalition's different components to maintain military coordination and political cohesion under both domestic and international pressures. 📌



## IV. Rebel weapons captured from SAF

The military balance of the war, which was highly asymmetrical and favourable to the SAF and allied groups at first, progressively shifted as the SPLM-N began winning battles and capturing equipment from SAF and affiliated militias. Several SPLM-N officers<sup>79</sup> said the rebel movement in the Nuba Mountains initially had a relatively well-trained force,<sup>80</sup> but fairly limited arsenals, mainly those controlled by the SPLA's 9th Division during the CPA's interim period. These stockpiles, made up of Soviet-type small and medium calibre artillery—essentially the same equipment used by both SAF and South Sudan's army—were reportedly bulked up in the first weeks of the war through deliveries from SPLA amouries, including that of the 9th Division at Jaw on the South Kordofan border. Deliveries included five T-55 tanks and undetermined, although allegedly limited, ammunition supplies.<sup>81</sup> The Sudanese army also increased its military capacity, moving part of its already available stockpile from El Obeid to South Kordofan.

During several successful military confrontations between June 2011 and April 2012, SPLM-N and JEM forces significantly increased their arsenals by capturing SAF stockpiles. This was a general trend over the first year and provided essential weapons and—most importantly—ammunition to fighting units. The rebel forces' use of SAF as an unwilling, although immediate, provider of weapons and ammunition proved to be a critical element in preserving SPLM-N strength and made the movement less reliant on military supplies from outside the country. Rebels also seized technicals and military trucks, which were key, especially after the airspace over South Kordofan's 'liberated areas' was closed, interrupting possible air supplies. This general trend eroded the government's prior military superiority, which is now limited to the skies.

### Documenting captured stocks

Field research into captured equipment partially verified rebel claims that both the SPLM-N and JEM in South Kordofan and border areas regularly seized weapons, ammunition, and vehicles.<sup>82</sup> The two movements, as well as the SPLA

in the Jaw and Hejlj battles, shared seized materiel according to their capacity to transport it and depending on their specific tactical needs. Many of those interviewed, including some frustrated SPLM-N officers, said JEM often took the lion's share as its units were quicker to gather stockpiles and better equipped with vehicles to immediately transport the captured weaponry off the front-line and back to base. JEM preferred to focus on small calibre ammunition and weapons that could be fired from moving vehicles, such as assault rifles, machine guns, and RPG launchers. The SPLM-N took most of the medium calibre equipment, such as mortars and recoilless rifles and their ammunition, armoured vehicles including tanks, and, to a much lesser extent, APCs, and landmines. These weapons are not suited to JEM's mobile tactics.<sup>83</sup> An SPLM-N political leader said his forces had been so successful in capturing vehicles and weapons that there was competition between SPLM-N commanders 'going to fight to crash the scores' of their rivals (Tubiana, 2012).

None of the rebel movements effectively maintain updated weapons' inventories and seized equipment has been almost immediately transferred to frontline units. As a result, this report can only provide approximate assessments, based on direct physical inspections of stockpiles and verified information from different sources, of the quantity of military items captured from SAF.<sup>84</sup> With this caveat in mind, there is strong evidence indicating that SPLM-N and JEM<sup>85</sup> captured important volumes of SAF equipment, including:

- Thousands of rounds of 7.62×39 mm, 7.62×54R mm, 12.7×108 mm, and 14.5×114 mm ammunition;
- Between 80 and 130 4×4 vehicles;
- Between 20 and 50 trucks;
- At least two 35mm QLZ-87 AGL grenade launchers with ammunition (DFS87-HE anti-personnel and DFJ87 armour-piercing types);
- 35mm AGS-17 grenade-launchers;
- A dozen recoilless rifles (73 mm SPG-9 and 82 mm B-10);
- Dozens of BK-881M ammunition;
- Several dozen 73 mm RPG-9 and RPG-7 rockets and launchers;
- Several dozen machine guns (PK, DShK, and KRV types) and AKM-type assault-rifles;
- Dozens of mortar tubes (82 mm and 120 mm) and more than 100 units of mortar ammunition (60 mm, 81 mm, 82 mm, and 120 mm)



60 mm and 81 mm mortar bombs with Farsi markings, suggesting Iranian origin, observed in South Kordofan, May 2012. © Claudio Gramizzi

- Two APC vehicles, BTR-type (captured by SPLM-N),<sup>86</sup>
- At least six T-55 tanks<sup>87</sup> and 122mm tank ammunition (captured by the SPLM-N), giving the group, by December 2012, 12 tanks in South Kordofan;
- At least five dozen MK-4 type anti-personnel landmines;
- Several anti-tank mines (T-72 AT and GLD-215).

South Sudan's SPLA also took advantage of their April 2012 victory over SAF units deployed to protect oil facilities in Hejlij to capture military goods, allegedly including unknown volumes of ammunition, artillery weapons, and a significant number of vehicles including military trucks and pick-up 4x4 vehicles.<sup>88</sup>

## Weapons and ammunition observed

Weapons observed in South Kordofan, originally sourced from SAF, were mainly older Soviet-type small arms, light weapons, and their ammunition,<sup>89</sup> the majority originating from Bulgaria, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine.<sup>90</sup> In addition to a small number of Iranian weapons, including 60 mm and 81 mm mortar bombs (see photos opposite),

field research also identified recently manufactured Sudanese mortar systems<sup>91</sup> and small arms ammunition. Relatively new Chinese weapons were also observed, including small calibre ammunition, QLZ-87 grenade systems (see photos below), and 302 mm Weishi long-range rockets for multiple launch rocket systems, containing an FG-42 rocket motor with an advanced hydroxy-terminated polybutadine propellant and a warhead filled with steel ball bearings. A Khartoum-based military observer said ‘those were moved to South Kordofan just after the start

of the war’ in June 2011.<sup>92</sup> Even if these rockets appear to have caused only limited casualties,<sup>93</sup> the size and range clearly had an important psychological effect on the civilian population and, to some extent, on SPLM-N fighters.<sup>94</sup>

Although probably manufactured more than a decade ago, some of the items observed in the captured stockpiles were still wrapped in the original plastic packaging, including PG7M and PG7L rockets, PG7PM propellants, which were manufactured in Bulgaria between 1987 and 1997,<sup>95</sup> and PK machine-guns. The presence of packaged and new weapons corroborates accounts given by alleged witnesses of the flow of SAF-controlled and already available stockpiles to South Kordofan in the early days of the conflict, and supplies provided by Khartoum to affiliated militias.

The SPLM-N also captured large quantities of recently manufactured small and medium calibre ammunition from SAF.<sup>96</sup> As shown in the pictures on page 37, 7.62×54R mm ammunition, 12.7×108 mm rounds, and 35 mm grenades bear markings consistent with



QLZ-87 grenade-launchers observed in South Kordofan, May 2012. © Claudio Gramizzi



7.62x54R mm and 12.7x108 mm ammunition and DFS87 and DFJ87 grenades observed in South Kordofan, May 2012. © Claudio Gramizzi

those of Chinese manufacture between 2005 and 2010, also cited in recent reports on Darfur.<sup>97</sup>

Given the strategic importance of vehicles, inspections undertaken for this report paid particular attention to captured vehicles—almost exclusively Toyota Land Cruisers and KIA KM450—and trucks, including GIAD, Sudanese-manufactured models, second-hand 4x4 type 461, and 6x6 KAT1 G1 MAN military trucks.<sup>98</sup> Research confirmed the government’s ability to procure large fleets of Land Cruisers for its security agencies, including SAF, through private distribution channels in Gulf states. The 10 vehicles inspected by the Small Arms Survey in South Kordofan in May 2012—all captured and operated by the SPLM-N—were delivered to Sudan from mid-2010 and throughout 2011. Ironically, the SPLM-N appears to have procured Land Cruisers from the same dealers in Oman.<sup>99</sup>

German manufactured MAN military trucks, seen in South Kordofan in May 2012 after capture from SAF, were shipped to Port Sudan from Antwerp, Belgium, on 26 June 2010 (4x4 type 461) and from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on 27 October 2011 (6x6 KAT1 G1-type).<sup>100</sup> These vehicles were purchased from the *Verwertungsgesellschaft des Bundes* (VEBEG), a trust company of Germany’s Ministry of Finance that manages disposal sales from the federal army surplus stockpile,<sup>101</sup> by a Dutch-registered private company, Van Vliet Trucks Holland BV. According to information from Van Vliet Handelonderneming BV (a subsidiary of Van Vliet Trucks Holland BV) and the Dutch authorities, the trucks were exported and repainted white while special military features were removed.<sup>102</sup> The consignee of both transfers was a Sudanese company registered in Khartoum as Concept Development Co. Ltd. Although it proved impossible to determine the identity of the company owners, the authors could verify that the address provided by the company to the exporters is the same as the one of Giad Services and Investment Co. Ltd—likely to be part of GIAD Holding—directly controlled by the GoS.<sup>103</sup>

Although further investigation is needed to determine who transported these vehicles after they arrived in Port Sudan, data shows they were speedily deployed to South Kordofan and, soon after, were in the rebels’ possession. The exporting company did not apply for an export licence, arguing that ‘the vehicles are non-strategic (non-military) goods’ and that ‘no export licence is required’.<sup>104</sup> However, for the German Federal Office of Economics and Export Control

(BAFA) the trucks are 'specially designed for military use'<sup>105</sup> and 'the transfer or export of these vehicles requires a licence, according to foreign trade regulations', including after 'repainting and removal of certain military features'.<sup>106</sup> The Dutch authorities responsible for export control and strategic goods nevertheless considered that 'no export license was required'<sup>107</sup> as 'vehicles of these make and type are not classified as a ML6 item of the EU Common Military List'.<sup>108</sup> 

## V. Reported indiscriminate weapons use by SAF

On-the-ground inspections and testimonies gathered in the first half of 2012 suggest SAF used a number of indiscriminate weapons during military operations in both South Kordofan and the Unity state border area. The use of such weapons, in particular against civilian populations, may constitute a violation of International Humanitarian Law. Among items captured from government forces, the Small Arms Survey identified anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines, as well as an unexploded sub-munition from a cluster bomb. The Small Arms Survey heard several statements about the possible use of chemical ammunition on both sides of the Sudan–South Sudan border, while victims of incendiary bombs were interviewed in South Kordofan.



MK-4 landmines observed in South Kordofan, May 2012. © Jérôme Tubiana and Claudio Gramizzi



## Anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines<sup>109</sup>

While inspecting stores of military equipment captured from SAF arsenals in South Kordofan, in May 2012, the Small Arms Survey noted two identical batches of anti-personnel landmines, identified as MK-4 (also known as No. 4), an Iranian-made, plastic encased, and pressure-operated model (see photos on page 40).<sup>110</sup> While the first batch was reportedly captured during fighting in Troji in February 2012, the second batch was reportedly seized by the SPLM-N from the SAF garrison in Heiban in June 2011.

Two boxes containing plastic encased T-72 AT (batch number 06-81-6982) and GLD-215, with painted 01-03 markings, anti-tank mines were also observed; the T-72 mines were reportedly captured by the SPLM-N in Troji, along with the anti-personnel mines, while the GLD-215 were allegedly taken from SAF units during the battle in Jaw around the same time (see photos below).<sup>111</sup> While no reports on the use of these by the Sudanese army and affiliated militias in the Nuba Mountains were obtained, identical mines were captured by the SPLA-South from Southern armed opposition groups. As previously reported by the Small Arms Survey, T-72 AT mines, identical to those seen in South Kordofan and bearing the same batch number, were laid by the South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA) around Mayom, in Unity state, on 29 October 2011 (Small Arms Survey, 2012b). In March 2011, several dozen GLD-215 mines were seized from South Sudan Democratic Army forces, loyal to George Athor, in Jonglei state.<sup>112</sup>

At the time of drafting this report, the Small Arms Survey could not determine whether the SPLM-N intended to destroy the anti-personnel mines. An SPLM-N interviewee, however, said the group reused a landmine captured



Anti-tank landmines observed in South Kordofan, May 2012. © Jérôme Tubiana and Claudio Gramizzi

from SAF, referring to an incident that involved one car within a convoy led by Nuba militia leader Kafi Tayara, in Tess.<sup>113</sup> A ‘top secret’ operation order for a SAF offensive toward eastern Kadugli and Um Durein, issued by the 14th Division headquarters and dated 24 November 2011, warns that the ‘enemy’ will use landmines.<sup>114</sup>

## Cluster bombs<sup>115</sup>

One unexploded sub-munition, identified as M20G-type and fired by 107 mm mortars, was observed in Troji on 20 May 2012 (see photo below). According to SPLM-N officers in charge of the unit deployed to this locality, the sub-munition was found by children playing on the outskirts of the town, a few days before the Small Arms Survey visited.

SPLM-N officers in charge of military equipment in the area said other unexploded cluster bombs and sub-munition of a different type—reportedly Chinese-manufactured DPICM Type 81—had been previously identified and destroyed

after they were fired over Troji on 29 February 2012. These testimonies, corroborating other reports that circulated in April<sup>116</sup> and May 2012,<sup>117</sup> confirm the use of cluster bombs by the Sudanese Air Force over the Nuba Mountains, despite official denials by Khartoum.<sup>118</sup>



M20G sub-munition observed in South Kordofan, May 2012. © Claudio Gramizzi

## Incendiary bombs

The Small Arms Survey also documented at least two different occasions of SAF use of incendiary-type bombs through direct testimonies from victims. On 6 March 2012, at least two incendiary bombs were reportedly dropped by a SAF-operated Antonov plane over SPLM-N positions in Jaw.

One private was killed and two others were severely burned and treated in hospital. According to one of the victims, the explosion of the bomb was unusual because 'it did not only explode, but also burned the air around, as if it were dry grass, although there was no grass around'.<sup>119</sup>

A civilian victim of another reported air strike in the Abu Leila locality, on 28 April 2012, gave a similar account. One bomb, 'looking like a drum', was dropped over a village, producing a ball of 'fire and heat', and causing the death of one woman, a four-year-old, and an 18-month-old, while another woman and a 10-year-old were seriously burned.<sup>120</sup> Medical personnel, who treated the injured, said they could not determine whether the bombs used were industrial or home-made, but said the victims had 'purple spots around the burns, similar to those created by jet-fuel combustion', and that the burns 'certainly resulted from very high temperature combustions, affecting many layers of skin and creating very dry injuries that are extremely difficult to cure'.<sup>121</sup>

## Unverified reports of use of toxic weapons<sup>122</sup>

Several SPLM-N and South Sudan army soldiers who took part in direct confrontations against SAF, respectively in Tolodi and Hejlj in April 2012, reported cases of poisoning, sometimes leading to death, resulting from the inhalation of fumes released from SAF-fired artillery bombs.<sup>123</sup> Medical personnel who treated more than 40 soldiers injured in these battles confirmed the nature of these injuries. Despite not being able to conduct comprehensive tests, they said the symptoms appeared likely to be created by an organo-phosphate poisoning.<sup>124</sup>

SPLM-N officers and soldiers said the ammunition responsible was fired from 35 mm QLZ-87 grenade-launchers, like those seen in photographs on page 36.<sup>125</sup> At the time of writing it was not possible to determine whether the ammunition captured by the SPLM-N, and allegedly responsible for these symptoms, was known to produce such effects. Grenades and grenade-launchers inspected by the Small Arms Survey in May 2012 are described by the Chinese Academy of Machinery as anti-personnel and armour-piercing (Yang et al., 2010). 🗨

## **VI. North-South conflict along the South Kordofan–Unity border**

Since the war has resumed in South Kordofan, the borderlands between South Kordofan and South Sudan's Unity state have not only been the theatre of the war between Khartoum and SRF (SPLM-N and JEM rebels) but also of direct confrontations between Sudan and South Sudan. Both armies have crossed the border, and Khartoum's airplanes have bombed Unity. The reasons for this war are notably that the SPLM-N controls part of the border and that SRF forces have been able to cross it and find safe haven in Unity, including in the Yida refugee camp, thanks to SPLM-N long-standing relations with their former brothers in arms now in power in Juba. But other factors play a role, including the fact that some areas of this part of the border, notably Jaw, are disputed, while the escalation of the war has also pushed Juba to put forward new claims on the southernmost parts of what is now South Kordofan, not to mention the Abyei area in the south-west of the state. One of those claimed areas is the oil-rich Hejlj-Panthou area, where the SPLA has been operating alongside JEM, although the forces clearly had separate agendas.

### **Bombing along and across the border**

Using both military aircraft and civilian-registered Antonov planes,<sup>126</sup> the Sudanese Air Force has been directly involved in South Kordofan and in the spillover conflict along the border with South Sudan. Since the early stages of the fighting in South Kordofan, SAF incursions into South Sudan's air space have been regularly reported in Unity state, in particular over Jaw and the border areas of Pariang, Mayom, and Rubkona. Khartoum's use of air strikes mirrors its tactical approach in Darfur.<sup>127</sup> Aerial attacks were mainly carried out by Antonov cargo carriers operating as bomber planes, Sukhoi SU-25, and MiG fighter jets.<sup>128</sup> In early 2012, in Kadugli, SAF also deployed an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to conduct reconnaissance over the Nuba Mountains and South Sudan. The

UAV was identical to one observed by the UN Panel of Experts on Sudan in Darfur in 2008<sup>129</sup> and was assembled by Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industry Co. in 2006<sup>130</sup> with engine parts manufactured by Tillotson from Ireland and video-recording devices that appeared to be made in the United Kingdom. The UAV was downed by JEM fighters in Jaw on 13 March 2012.<sup>131</sup>

Observation of remnants of bombs and air-to-ground rockets fired against targets in Unity confirmed, despite the relatively limited volume of available evidence, SAF's use in Unity state and South Kordofan of equipment and ammunition identical to those used previously in Darfur and Bahr al Ghazal. These included 80 mm S-8 (DM and KO types) and 57 mm S-5SB unguided air-to-ground rockets, general purpose bombs (mainly FAB-type and copies), and bombs fashioned from drums filled with explosives, shrapnel, and rudimentary detonation devices taken from mortar or RPG fuzes.<sup>132</sup>

Taking advantage of both South Sudan's and the SPLM-N's lack of anti-aircraft defence systems, SAF operated over South Kordofan and Unity on an extremely regular basis, although the intensity of the attacks, the scale of the operations, and the repercussions for the local population in the Nuba Mountains appear to be much more significant when compared with targets in South Sudan.

While aerial operations in South Kordofan were common, air attacks over Unity state were less regular and intense, and peaked in March–April 2012.<sup>133</sup> In particular, between 15 and 23 April, SAF conducted several air strikes over Rubkona and Bentiu, dozens of kilometres into Unity. Given the presence of South Sudanese and SPLM-N troops in the border areas, it is difficult to ascertain whether previous aerial operations were deliberately targeting South Sudanese objectives. However, the repeated bombing of precise and strategic zones in Unity's capital, in particular bridges and oilfields, constituted deliberate acts of hostility against South Sudan's 4th Division and the Juba government.

As was the case in Darfur, if aerial military assets gave a clear advantage to Sudan in its battle against the SPLM-N and its Southern allies, they were not wholly effective. Air strikes in South Kordofan and Unity were not particularly accurate,<sup>134</sup> calling into question the Sudanese army's ability to capitalize on its superior equipment and technology. The deployment of SAF aerial assets did, however, affect the population, many of whom said air strikes led to food insecurity, interruption of basic services, and displacements.<sup>135</sup> According to a

Khartoum-based military observer, ‘Antonov primarily aim for a psychological effect, which is why they sometimes fly for reconnaissance and without conducting aerial attacks. They target in particular the south of the Nuba Mountains, because they want to push civilians to move north’, to the government areas, instead of to South Sudan.<sup>136</sup> As in Darfur, the extensive use of air assets in the Nuba Mountains allowed the government to drive people from ‘liberated areas’, isolating the SPLM-N from its popular support base.

According to the SPLM-N, between June 2011 and November 2012 some 1,700 bombs were dropped on South Kordofan’s rebel-held areas, with a peak of 405 bombs in November.<sup>137</sup> According to data from the main surgical centre in South Kordofan’s SPLM-N-controlled areas, from June 2011 until 14 May 2012, 101 people—out of a total 883 patients—were treated for injuries caused by air strikes.<sup>138</sup> During the wave of SAF strikes in Unity and the Hejlj area between late March and late April 2012, the civilian hospital in Bentiu recorded the deaths of 20 civilians, and treated 79 people, including a small number of soldiers who could not be treated at the military hospital.<sup>139</sup>

## The role of the GoSS

In spite of differences in terms of objectives, cultures, and an occasional lack of trust, the ideological and historical ties between the SPLM-N and South Sudan’s army have remained strong. The same is true of SPLM-N politicians and the new government in Juba, whose members are largely drawn from the army, despite some differences between South Sudan’s politicians about what position to adopt with regard to the rebels. While some influential players in Juba have been trying to cut these ties in order to appease Khartoum, many have maintained the links for moral and political reasons. The latter include, in particular, military officials and politicians from the states bordering Sudan, as well as those from the Abyei area, who believe that supporting the rebels may weaken Khartoum’s claim over Abyei. They also believe the rebellion diverts SAF away from Abyei and other disputed border areas, while tying up economic resources.<sup>140</sup> Other SPLM-N supporters in South Sudan include those who bought into Garang’s unitarian stance, and who have not given up on the idea of a ‘New Sudan’. After independence, as fears that Khartoum would oppose the new state dissipated, the pro-SPLM-N lobby became more influential in Juba.

The way combatants from different regions and tribes fought together during the civil war is a strong underlying factor in ties between Juba and the SPLM-N. Many Nuba SPLA fighters were active in South Sudan. During the civil war, and even up to the declaration of independence, the Nuba were considered the largest 'Northern' component of the SPLA, followed by soldiers from southern Blue Nile, and, to a lesser extent, from Darfur.<sup>141</sup> During the interim period, several thousand Nuba were still part of various divisions of what would become the South Sudanese army, notably in Western Bahr al Ghazal.<sup>142</sup> Even after independence, in late 2011, some 10,000 Northern soldiers, in particular from the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, were still serving in South Sudan's army, according to figures from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).<sup>143</sup> According to an SPLA officer, 'South Kordofan and Blue Nile soldiers were given orders to go back to their areas immediately after the referendum', in January 2011.<sup>144</sup> The decision for this 'disengagement' was reportedly taken in a closed meeting of the SPLM political bureau (including Malik Agar, Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, and Yasir Arman) in Juba in February 2011.<sup>145</sup> But some in the SPLA were reluctant to let reputedly good soldiers leave, and some Northern soldiers were also reluctant to leave.

The disengagement process was slow, but accelerated after independence, when Juba gradually encouraged its Northern soldiers to join the SPLM-N. According to Abdel-Aziz, 'implementation has taken long. The disengagement really started in October 2011. Starting from then, thousands of Nuba soldiers of the SPLA came back to South Kordofan, by order from [SPLA chief of staff] James Hoth. 80 per cent of the Nuba troops went back. Those who were not interested to come had to take the Southern citizenship and could remain in the SPLA-South.'<sup>146</sup> This move toward disengagement was a way to offset possible criticism from Khartoum and the international community for not having demobilized Northern soldiers earlier, but it also indirectly provided support in the form of new troops to the SPLM-N.<sup>147</sup>

At the same time, there were Southern soldiers within the ranks of South Kordofan's 9th Division. According to Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, those left South Kordofan in July 2011.<sup>148</sup> But this process also seems to have been slow as, according to Malik Agar, both Southern soldiers and Juba were reluctant. 'Deciding Southerners to leave both South Kordofan and Blue Nile was difficult. Juba

didn't want to give the order because they felt they could have been accused of betraying us. So in October 2011, Abdel-Aziz and myself collected all Southerners and told them to go South. It was a political choice, not a military one, as militarily it led to a lack of forces. Some Southerners refused unless they have an order from the chief of staff in Juba. So we brought them to Jaw and Maban [in South Sudan's Upper Nile state] until they got the order. They were then incorporated into local divisions [in Unity and Upper Nile].<sup>149</sup>

Whether those Southern troops fought in South Kordofan between June and October 2011 is unclear. Some SPLA believe the South is still indebted to the Northern troops who fought in the civil war. This became evident when the international community criticized the fact that SPLM-N salaries were still being paid by Juba after independence, at least until September–October 2011 and possibly even later. According to SPLM-N officials, the SPLA decided SPLM-N troops should be given a 'transition' period during which they would still receive payments.<sup>150</sup> According to a Western analyst close to the Juba government, by December 2011 some 15,000 Nuba soldiers seemed to remain on the payroll of the SPLA or the GoSS.<sup>151</sup> By December 2012, the 'transition' was reportedly still ongoing for at least some officers.<sup>152</sup> This could be considered the most important 'support' from Juba to the SPLM-N. International pressures, as well as the GoSS budget shortfall following the closure of South Sudan's oil fields, reportedly contributed to end this practice—Juba beginning to struggle to pay its own (Southern) soldiers' wages.<sup>153</sup>

While, since September to November 2011, various international observers acknowledge that Juba has made efforts to sever ties with the SPLM-N, it is paradoxically during this period that Khartoum has made tougher demands on the issue—asking Juba to disarm SPLM-N troops as an implicit part of the security arrangements of the September 2012 agreements with South Sudan, and refusing to implement the whole deal, including reopening the pipeline, if this is not done.<sup>154</sup>

The fact that SPLM-N fighters were not asked by Juba to hand over weapons and vehicles inherited from the civil war—including tanks—could be interpreted as a concrete example of direct support provided to the movement.<sup>155</sup> However, the Small Arms Survey has found no evidence of weapon supplies from the GoSS to the SPLM-N after independence. Because the rebels had significant



stocks prior to South Sudan's independence,<sup>156</sup> and captured SAF weapons over the first year of the conflict, the Nuba rebels do not need to rely on external sources of arms and ammunition, at least for the time being.<sup>157</sup>

There are, however, some reports that both SPLM-N and JEM are benefitting from other kinds of assistance, including logistical aid—such as the delivery of vehicles to SPLM-N, and fuel and food supply. Training might also have been provided, notably in the Mapel garrison, south-east of Wau in Western Bahr al Ghazal.<sup>158</sup> Since late 2010, Khartoum has repeatedly said members of the SRF, including JEM and other Darfur rebel movements, are able to find safe haven and medical assistance in South Sudan.<sup>159</sup> The Small Arms Survey has observed SPLM-N and JEM fighters in Unity state, most notably in Rubkona where South Sudan's 4th Division has its headquarters.<sup>160</sup> SPLM-N and JEM rebels have also been seen in the Yida refugee camp, and this militarization has been a major issue for humanitarian actors.<sup>161</sup> Finally, another type of support, less visible but equally important, has been Southern authorities' detention of both JEM and SPLM-N dissidents.<sup>162</sup>

Direct links appear less covert around Jaw, on the border between South Kordofan and Unity state. Officially, SPLM-N's 9th Division and the SPLA's 4th Division are supposed to control different areas in Jaw, with a checkpoint between their respective areas of responsibility, which is meant to mark the border between the North and the South. In practice, the two garrisons cooperate openly and, when necessary, share military equipment. These troops fought together against SAF in Jaw in February 2012.<sup>163</sup> JEM fighters have also been based around Jaw and took part in the battle.<sup>164</sup> SPLM-N and JEM wounded fighters were allegedly treated in health facilities in South Sudan. As North-South tensions escalated around the border, SPLM-N and JEM increasingly penetrated into South Sudan, notably in Unity state. While this support remains crucial for the Northern rebels, it also risks falsely depicting their struggle as part of the North-South conflict, with their fighters appearing as proxies.

## The battles of Jaw and Hejlij

Jaw is not the only disputed area on the border between Sudan and South Sudan but it is of crucial strategic importance for the SPLM-N. It remains its main entry

point to South Sudan and is close to the Yida refugee camp. Moreover, Jaw was a major base of South Kordofan's 9th Division during the CPA interim period.

In November 2011, in an attempt to sever the road between South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains, SAF and proxy militias from Kharasana and Hejlj deployed forces in Jaw, just a few kilometres from South Sudan's 4th Division and SPLM-N's 9th Division, which was later joined by JEM fighters. At the same time, SAF seized Troji on the strategic southernmost foothills of the Nuba Mountains. SAF reportedly had some 6,000 troops in the area, including militias from both Sudan and South Sudan, and they were seen as a major threat to the SPLM-N, as well as to South Sudan forces in border areas, who would now face ground incursions and air strikes. A particularly powerful aerial bombardment took place on 12 February 2012, just two days after the signing in Addis Ababa of a Memorandum of Understanding on Non-Aggression and Cooperation between Sudan and South Sudan. However, the strike did not garner much reaction, either from the international backers of the latest agreement, or from South Sudanese politicians.

This situation left troops on the ground frustrated, which could explain why they decided to retaliate militarily, possibly without waiting for orders from Juba. On 26 February, SPLA, SPLM-N, and JEM fighters pushed Khartoum's forces from Jaw, Troji, and neighbouring Ad Dar. The attack was reportedly well coordinated and prepared. Both South Sudan's forces and JEM combatants had deployed extra forces in the area as early as 8–9 April 2012.<sup>165</sup> South Sudan had more than 400 men, mostly local SPLA 4th Division troops, but also reportedly men from the 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Divisions. While the whole attack was reportedly coordinated by 3rd Division Commander Maj. Gen. Santino Deng Wol, the SPLA was led by the 4th Division's commander, Lt. Gen. Gatduel Gatluak, and Brig. Gen. Peter Tor Nyal, the commander of 4th Division's 20th brigade, based in the southern part of Jaw.<sup>166</sup>

The SPLM-N was led by Brig. Gen. Nimeiri Suleiman Mourad, also based in Jaw. JEM forces, composed of some 300 men with 26 cars, played the role of cavalry because of their mobility, and were led by Fadel Mohamed Rahoma.<sup>167</sup> The anti-Khartoum forces captured two tanks and some 100 vehicles, most of which the SPLA reportedly brought south. They killed 30 to 40 SAF.<sup>168</sup> The defeated forces withdrew eastward towards Kharasana and Hejlj, pursued by JEM, and westward towards Tolodi.<sup>169</sup>

From that point, the war in South Kordofan and the new North-South conflict merged. The fighting then spread on both sides of the border, adding another dangerous element: oil. In March, SAF reacted to defeat in Jaw by extending aerial incursions further south, targeting Unity state oilfields (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012b). In April, tensions escalated to unprecedented levels when South Sudan's troops occupied the main Sudanese oilfield of Hejlij, in the western part of South Kordofan, for 10 days. Juba said the area, called Panthou in the Dinka language, was to be considered part of South Sudan.<sup>170</sup> On April 20, international pressure finally persuaded Juba to withdraw its troops.

For the Southern forces, this successful incursion was a reaction to Khartoum's ground incursions and air strikes in the border area of Panakuach and Teshwin, south of Hejlij, where SAF and SPLA positions were very close to each other. Khartoum's attacks included a 26 March raid on Teshwin by the Nuer-dominated SSLA rebels, led by Maj. Gen. Bapiny Montuil Wijang, who, supported by SAF artillery, chased the SPLA south to Panakuach, and burned one of their barracks in Teshwin. In retaliation, the Southern troops spontaneously pursued SAF northwards and, as they did not face much resistance, reached Hejlij area, where they stayed for two days.<sup>171</sup> On 4 April, again, the SPLA reportedly retaliated to a SAF attack on Panakuach and Teshwin by crossing the border, stopping before entering Hejlij—the same day, Bentiu's civilian hospital received 19 South Sudanese soldiers wounded in the Hejlij area.<sup>172</sup> South Sudan claimed that, on 10 April, their troops moved toward Hejlij to pursue SAF troops and allied Nuer militias who had again attacked Teshwin and Panakuach.<sup>173</sup> A local GoSS official said those militias numbered 600 to 800 men, and were under the command of James Gai Yoak, Bapiny Montuil, and Matthew Puljang.<sup>174</sup> They were reportedly followed by SAF troops equipped with tanks and covered by aerial bombardments.<sup>175</sup>

JEM forces were present in all these attacks, deploying combatants from the local Missiriya Humur Arab tribe, whose members had increasingly turned against Khartoum since the resumption of the war in South Kordofan.<sup>176</sup> JEM representatives say their forces entered Hejlij one or two days (8 or 9 April) before South Sudan's troops, and as early as 9 April continued toward Kharasana. One South Sudan officer, who fought in both Hejlij and Kilo 23, from 13 to 20 April, said: 'you can't rule out that SRF forces have attacked before us, but we can't confirm it. One thing is sure: SRF men know the area, we don't'.<sup>177</sup>

After taking Hejlij, South Sudan and JEM forces continued north towards Kharasana and fought in Kilo 23, located between Hejlij and Kharasana and reportedly the base of the Khartoum-backed SSLA. South Sudan's army occupied the area on 19 April, before having to withdraw from both Hejlij and Kilo 23 the next day.<sup>178</sup> As early as 14 April, 20 Southern soldiers who had been injured in Kilo 23 were brought to Bentiu hospital, followed on 18 April by 38 fighters who were reportedly injured during Antonov bombings in the Kharasana area.<sup>179</sup>

South Sudan troops deployed in Hejlij and Kilo 23 numbered some 800 men from the 4th Division. They were quickly reinforced by 2,000 troops from the 'commandos' and other divisions, in particular the 3rd and 6th Divisions, and later the 2nd Division. The deployment of the commandos at Kilo 23 shows the presence of Southern militias there was a major concern for Juba—as 'the mission of the commandos is to eradicate those militias wherever they operate'.<sup>180</sup> This time the decision to move across the border was reportedly taken in Juba by Lt. Gen. Obote Mamur, the deputy chief of staff in charge of political and moral orientation.<sup>181</sup> JEM deployed 75 cars.<sup>182</sup> SAF had four battalions, or between 5,000 and 7,000 men, with 28 tanks, as well as the support of several thousand Northern and Southern militia fighters.<sup>183</sup>

Missiriya fighters currently members of the SPLM-N claim to have also fought in Kharasana and Hejlij areas between 10 and 20 April 2012.<sup>184</sup> They would have deployed several hundred foot soldiers under the command of Bokora Mohamed Fadel.<sup>185</sup> Abdel-Aziz al Hilu explained that, if those Missiriya were operating in the area at the same time as the SPLA, it was not as members of the SPLM-N and not under his orders, as they were still under the Southern 4th Division's command. Indeed, as partly witnessed by the authors, some of their main leaders travelled to the Nuba Mountains in April–May 2012 to discuss their integration into SPLM-N.<sup>186</sup>

SRF leaders said privately that South Sudan merely took advantage of their victory to capture Hejlij. Northern rebels were asked by Juba not to publicize their successes for fear they would be labelled proxy forces. Despite this, Khartoum viewed the SRF as a Southern proxy and used this rhetoric effectively when communicating with the public and international mediators (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012b).

Although the Hejlij incident highlighted deep linkages between the South Kordofan and the Sudan–South Sudan crises, it would be simplistic to view the

South Kordofan conflict as merely a proxy war between the two neighbours. The long-standing ties between the SPLM-N and Juba, and the common interests of the SRF and Juba during the Hejlil episode, do not override the SRF's military and political autonomy. The SRF Missiriya troops, who consider Hejlil part of their legitimate theatre of operations, did not take part simply to back Southern territorial claims, some of which they do not endorse. JEM, in particular, intended to use the South's presence in Hejlil to push toward Kharasana and Kadugli. Its fighters were unable to implement this strategy because of the unexpected withdrawal of the SPLA.<sup>187</sup>

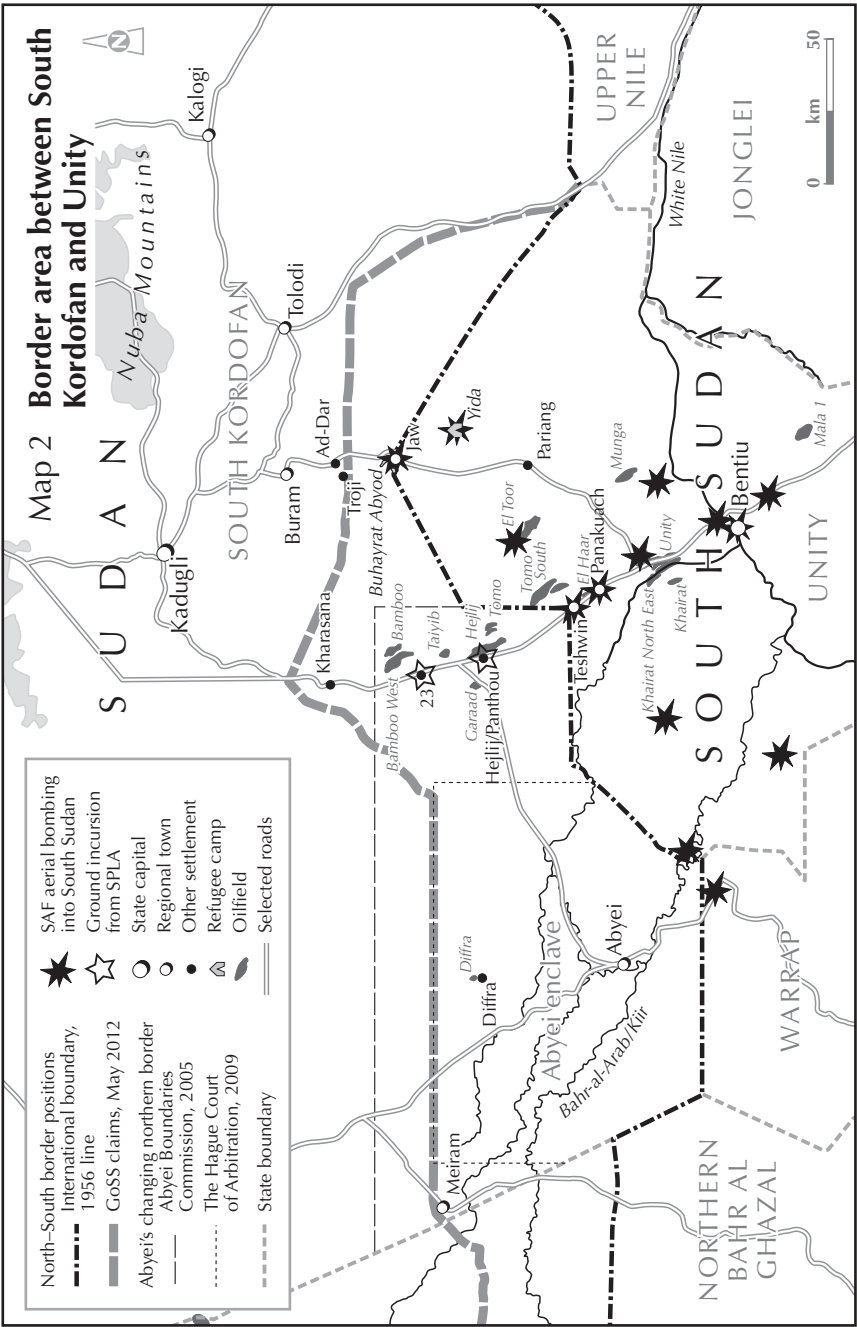
## The South Kordofan–Unity border dispute

As historian Douglas Johnson wrote, 'the border between Unity State and South Kordofan is potentially the most problematic section of the North–South boundary, as it passes through the area of the main working oil fields' (Johnson, 2010, p. 59). In addition, the region is particularly important for pastoralism, highly strategic for the Nuba struggle, and includes the Abyei area, where demarcation has become increasingly political and symbolic.

Although it is not the authors' intention to elaborate on the Abyei crisis here, it is worth remembering that the different attempts to mark out the northern border of the Abyei area, which might become the Sudan–South Sudan border should a referendum take place, led to even more controversy. In 2005, the Abyei Boundaries Commission suggested a line based on the historical Dinka presence in the area. It was south of the line claimed by the SPLM, but included Hejlil and Meiram, an area the Missiriya consider part of their homeland. In 2009, The Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration determined a line further south, excluding Hejlil and Meiram.<sup>188</sup>

After the Hague ruling, Juba asserted separate claims over Hejlil. Maps produced by the GoSS and the SPLA, and viewed by the authors, present slightly different versions of the border with Sudan, and do not always include Hejlil. In May 2012, after its incursion towards Hejlil, Juba produced several maps, generally taking into account their claims further north, and always including Hejlil in the South. The map that represents the official Southern view of the border includes Kharasana (see Map 2).

**Map 2 Border area between South Kordofan and Unity**



- North-South border positions
- International boundary
- 1956 line
- GoSS claims, May 2012
- Abyei's changing northern border
- Abyei boundaries
- Commission, 2005
- The Hague Court of Arbitration, 2009
- State boundary
- SAF aerial bombing into South Sudan
- Ground incursion from SPLA
- State capital
- Regional town
- Other settlement
- Refugee camp
- Oilfield
- Selected roads

South Sudan's claim over Hejlj notably relies on the historical presence in the area of Dinka from the Panaru section. The South uses the Dinka name Panthou, the 'place of the tree *Balanites aegyptiaca*'. Hejlj would be the Arabic translation of the name of that tree. The 1931 colonial map of the area just mentions a 'clump of Hejlj', suggesting the Arabic name comes from a map feature. However, local Missiriya use another name—*Marafain* or 'Hyænas', the main water-point of the area.<sup>189</sup> Similar controversy also exists over Jaw, with Sudan preferring the Arabic names of Buhayrat Abyod ('white lake') and Gardud ('pasture').

The SRF has never openly challenged Juba's claims. It is nevertheless clear that the Missiriya and Nuba rebels do have their own views on the demarcation of the border with the South, and that these do not necessarily match those of their Southern allies. Missiriya fighters within the SPLM-N, in particular, want a 'soft border' in Abyei and claim that, without Khartoum's interference, they could easily reach an agreement with the local Ngok Dinka.<sup>190</sup> Their group also appears to be more discomfited by Southern claims on Hejlj and Kharasana, which they consider part of their tribal territory. Similarly, the Nuba also have claims on the Jaw area—some reaching as far as Pariang in northern Unity state—and express their discomfort with Juba's claims further east, towards the southernmost hills of the Nuba Mountains, including Jebel Liri. 🗿

## VII. Conclusions

The new war in South Kordofan is, largely, a continuation of the previous civil war. During the interim period, Northern members of the SPLM/A agreed to put a hold on their own claims so as not to endanger their Southern brothers-in-arms' independence. Many Nuba also pinned their hopes on the local elections and a popular consultation process despite the many disappointments they had suffered during the CPA period. The new war involves old enemies, who know and distrust each other more than ever, making both sides more radical and less susceptible to pressure for a serious peace process. The NCP, in particular, is not keen to accept further concessions after having consented to the secession of the South and to the opening of Darfur and, during the interim period, of South Kordofan itself to international humanitarian actors and 'peacekeeping' troops. It feels it did not receive the promised rewards from the international community, such as the removal of Sudan from the US State Department's list of states sponsoring terrorism, or a halt to the ICC's action against Bashir.<sup>191</sup> South Kordofan officials justify their opposition to humanitarian access to SPLM-N areas by saying that, during the interim period, international NGOs supplied arms to the local SPLA.<sup>192</sup> Hardliners in Khartoum increasingly view concessions to Sudan's peripheries as dangerous steps towards separatism which pose serious threats to the very existence of the state and the survival of the regime (Temin and Murphy, 2011).

Only the most hardline GoS and SAF officials seem to believe that a military victory is possible against the SRF.<sup>193</sup> Others believe SAF should be able to eliminate the SPLM-N in Blue Nile, isolate it in the Nuba Mountains through military operations, and pressure South Sudan not to allow the Nuba rebels to find safe haven in their territory.<sup>194</sup> While advocating the military option, hardliners are also trying to isolate the different segments of the opposition by separating the political from the armed opposition, and then dividing the different armed movements. Their priority is preventing local demands from coalescing into a national struggle that might gain international traction. South Kordofan appears, in many ways, as the new centre of gravity for this national



struggle, notably because the Nuba section of the SPLM-N and its leader, Abdel-Aziz, appear to have the best chance of uniting the different peripheral rebellions, as the creation of a coordinated rebel platform in Kaoda, under the SRF, showed.

The SPLM-N has become more radical with its push for regime change. Timing seems particularly favourable for them, since the independence of South Sudan and the subsequent coolness between the two countries have deprived Sudan of significant oil and trade revenues, and this gap has already sparked an unprecedented economic crisis. With faith in peace talks weaker than ever, and trust between the old enemies virtually non-existent, Nuba rebels now see conflict as the only method of fulfilling both their national and local ambitions. Possible options range from more autonomy within a federal Sudan, to full independence or joining South Sudan. They also believe that, should regime change take place in Khartoum (be it by force or through a peaceful process), it would lead to regional autonomy or perhaps even trigger the voluntary reunification of the two Sudans. If some of those ambitions seem unrealistic, the fact remains that the conflicts in Sudan's peripheries and the confrontation with the South are still, in spite of the South's separation, deeply intertwined.

The supply of weapons lies at the heart of these renewed and more radical ambitions: the 'new war' is between old enemies but these old rivals are now better equipped and, ironically, both benefit from the Sudanese government's supply chain.

In September 2012, a major round of negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, in Ethiopia, largely focused on the border dispute. The parties notably agreed to the establishment of a demilitarized zone along the frontier, that has still to be enforced. Khartoum believes this zone should stop rebels from moving back and forth across the border, and force South Sudan's troops and SRF forces to evacuate the Jaw area.<sup>195</sup> However neither the GoSS nor UN monitors deployed along the border are likely to be able to enforce such provisions and prevent SRF cross-border activities. SPLM-N leaders said that, even if the demilitarized zone presented a further constraint, their forces would still be able to operate along the border, given that they 'control' sections of it, not only in the Jaw area but also further east, between Upper Nile and South Kordofan, and between Upper Nile and Blue Nile.<sup>196</sup> More broadly speaking, the virtual exclusion of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and of the North-North dimension, from the latest negotiations left issues unresolved, some of which are still deeply intertwined with the Sudan–South Sudan conflict. 📌

# Endnotes

- 1 Similar oppressive actions took place earlier, in particular massive raids for slaves, notably during the Mahdiyyah (1885–99). The Nuba’s own historical narrative draws a straight line from earlier exploitative practices to the difficult relations with the centre of power in independent Sudan. However, the inequalities between the centre and the peripheral regions clearly arose in the post-independence period.
- 2 The violent cultural change has been sometimes described as Arabization and Islamization, although the word ‘Sudanization’ appears to be more accurate. Islamization in the Nuba Mountains, as among other non-Arab people of Sudan, has not always been forceful. Slow penetration of Islam in the mountains, before and during colonial times, also allowed the emergence of a particular syncretism between traditional beliefs, Islam, and the Christianity brought by Europeans.
- 3 The introduction to the ‘Re-structuring of the Sudanese State’ document (the SRF political agenda presented on 4 October 2012) explicitly identifies marginalization as one of the main reasons for the drive for regime change in Sudan: ‘[. . .] the great people of Sudan undertook two renowned historical revolutions in the 1960s and 1980s, which, unfortunately did not reap fruits for multiple reasons. Now, the dictatorship of the National Congress Party (NCP) government has intervened and deepened the historical injustices in terms of political marginalization, economic deprivation and social setbacks for all of the regions of Sudan. It added to all these an overriding failure in administering the diversity of the country by employing a unilateral political and cultural approach which led to the outbreak of war in Darfur, Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and the Eastern Sudan and which propelled the South of Sudan to secede’ (SRF, 2012).
- 4 See also African Rights (1995, pp. 38–50).
- 5 With South Kordofan, Blue Nile is the second area considered part of northern Sudan in which the SPLM/A managed to open a front.
- 6 Although SPLM members had been slowly integrated into the government at senior levels, integration into the civil service had not been fully implemented.
- 7 This was notably because of disagreements between the government and the SPLM/A on the census (Rottenburg et al., 2011, p. 11).
- 8 Haroun belongs to the Borgo, or Waddayans, a Chadian non-Arab tribe that moved east during colonial times. Abdel-Aziz, whose original non-Arab name is Kunji Hala Tallo Tucha, is a Masalit, not a Nuba. The Masalit are a Darfurian group whose members settled in the Nuba Mountains in the early 20th century. Abdel-Aziz joined the SPLM/A in the 1980s. According to him, there were then only three Masalit in the rebel movement: his wife, a nephew, and himself. Many more joined, together with other Darfurians, in the 2000s. In 1991–92, Abdel-Aziz led a failed SPLA expedition to Darfur together with the Fur dissident Daud Bowlad. After the latter was killed, Abdel-Aziz managed to retreat to South Sudan with most of the troops. Interview with Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, Addis Ababa, December 2012. See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, pp. 77, 80) and ICG (2013, p. 7).

- 9 Interviews with SPLM/A and SPLM-N officers and Western military observers, various locations, May–September 2012. See also ICG (2013, p. 15).
- 10 Interviews with SPLM-N officials, South Kordofan and Juba, May 2012; interviews with AUHIP members, Addis Ababa, June and September 2012.
- 11 Interview with Western military observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 12 See the Comprehensive Peace Agreement’s ‘Annexure I: Permanent Ceasefire and Security Arrangements Implementation Modalities and Appendices’, art. 7.1.4 (GoS and SPLM/A, 2005, p. 97).
- 13 Kodi later formed his own faction of the SPLM-N, SPLM-Peace Stream, close to the government and part of the government’s delegation to negotiations in Ethiopia. Authors’ observations and interviews with Malik Agar and Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, Addis Ababa, September and December 2012. See also ICG (2013, pp. 15–16).
- 14 Interviews with SPLM-N officials, South Kordofan and Juba, and civilian witnesses, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 15 Interviews with SPLM-N officials, Yida and Juba, May 2012; interview with South Kordofan government official, Addis Ababa, September 2012.
- 16 During the 2012 rainy season, the number of confrontations declined significantly, although some clashes were reported. More battles took place during the 2011 rainy season, as the war had then just started.
- 17 The SPLM-N said it repelled SAF raids on 22 and 23 August, and successfully attacked al Moreib village, close to Rashad, the following day. On 30 August, SAF said it had defeated an SPLM-N attack in Rashad. See *Sudan Tribune* (2012d; 2012e), Radio Dabanga (2012a).
- 18 Declaration by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Ali al Za’tari, quoted in several media articles. See, for example, *Sudan Tribune* (2012g; 2012i).
- 19 Interviews with SPLM-N officials including Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, Addis Ababa, December 2012. See also Small Arms Survey (2013).
- 20 As of February 2013, there is virtually no independent data on the humanitarian situation within South Kordofan’s rebel-controlled areas, as Khartoum still refuses independent assessments and relief—despite the memorandum of understanding, signed by the government and the ‘tripartite partners’ on 5 August. The distinction between ‘affected’, or sometimes ‘severely affected’, and ‘displaced’ people is often unclear, as humanitarian actors use the terms rather loosely. OCHA decided to talk about the ‘displaced or severely affected’ (OCHA, 2012).
- 21 Interviews with SPLM-N humanitarian officers, Addis Ababa, September 2012.
- 22 While Khartoum’s military strategy tends to push civilians from rebel areas to government-controlled ones, the government’s policy seems to be to discourage the displaced from gathering in IDP camps. This complicates efforts to assess how many people are on the move.
- 23 Email communications between the authors and relevant stakeholders, October 2012.
- 24 This aspect of the conflict is developed below. Figures mainly reflect data obtained from medical sources and sources linked to the SPLM-N who were interviewed in May 2012 in South Kordofan and South Sudan.
- 25 SPLM-N immediately accepted the ‘Joint Proposal for Access to Provide and Deliver Humanitarian Assistance to War-affected Civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States,’ submitted by the African Union, the League of Arab States, and the United Nations on 9 February 2012 (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012a), and signed a separate memorandum of understanding with the ‘tripartite partners’ on 4 August 2012 (Christian, 2012). The steps laid out in the memorandum of

understanding, in particular the design of an action plan, and the assessment of the humanitarian situation by the tripartite partners, were not implemented as of February 2013. According to OCHA, ‘despite various different detailed action plans that have been presented by the Tripartite since then, neither the Government nor the SPLM-N have yet formally agreed on a concrete plan of action for assessment and delivery of aid’ (OCHA, 2012).

- 26 Interview with Abdel-Aziz, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 27 Interview with Khartoum-based observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 28 SAF fired on a convoy led by the commander of the SPLA-JIUs at a checkpoint in Blue Nile’s capital, al Damazin.
- 29 Interview with Khartoum-based observer, Addis Ababa, September 2012.
- 30 During the May 2012 field mission to the Nuba Mountains and South Sudan, the authors interviewed a number of victims of and witnesses to abuses.
- 31 Various interviews with civilian victims and witnesses, as well as SPLM-N combatants, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 32 Interview with Maj. Gen. Jagod Mukwar and other SPLM-N officials, South Kordofan and Juba, May 2012.
- 33 According to the CPA, SAF was supposed to return to pre-war levels. Instead, they increased beyond them—threefold, according to some observers. Interviews with international and Sudanese analysts, January 2013.
- 34 Interview with NISS defector, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 35 Forced recruitment mainly targeted members of South Sudanese and Darfurian communities, but also, in South Kordofan itself, the Nuba. This occurred despite the fact that the Nuba, who in the past had provided troops for the national army as well as militias, appear increasingly distrusted by the SAF command. The main South Kordofan Arab tribes—Hawazma and Missiriya—also seem to have lost the government’s trust.
- 36 The defector explained that such recruitment campaigns were carried out by military intelligence and military police officers, deployed in Abu Jibeha area for this purpose. Officers visited villages, searching houses and shops, and forced all students without student ID cards to sign up for ‘voluntary’ recruitment. Defectors were also hunted.
- 37 Those low salaries are similar to those paid to newly recruited PDF in eastern Darfur during the same period (Gramizzi and Tubiana, 2012, p. 34).
- 38 According to SPLM-N Chairman Malik, SAF in South Kordofan included nearly 3,000 Darfurian elements by June 2011. Interview date and location withheld.
- 39 As reflected in numerous interviews conducted between February and May 2012, many Nuba traditional leaders refused to provide fighters to SAF and affiliated militias. According to leaders interviewed in May 2012, the government requested 2,000 men from Missiriya Arab leaders in July 2011, but was turned down.
- 40 Interviews with SPLM-N commanders and soldiers, including defectors from SAF and the PDF, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012.
- 41 Interview with NISS defector, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 42 There is some confusion over the label *mujahideen* and possible overlap with the PDF, as *mujahideen* from Northern Sudan were said to have been turned into PDF, and classical PDF or even SAF troops seem to be sometimes called *mujahideen*. Photographs of PDF/*mujahideen* ID cards, found on soldiers killed by the SPLM-N, seen by the authors. Interviews with South Kordofan intellectuals, January 2013.

- 43 Interviews with SPLM-N Hawazma members, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 44 Interviews with SPLM-N and JEM officers from South Kordofan, including one who defected from SAF in June 2011, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012.
- 45 Equipment only rarely includes vehicles. PDF elements generally get around on foot, horses, or camels, but can use SAF transportation to reach battle sites.
- 46 According to this testimony, all the rifles had bayonets. Around half the rifles had a wooden shoulder, while the rest had a folder-shoulder.
- 47 According to an SAF defector who said he saw the distribution, one box of 750 rounds was given to every three combatants. In total, 2 MAN trucks were off-loaded in Abu Jibeha on 5 June 2011, and distributed to local PDF on 7 June.
- 48 According to the SPLM-N officer who said he saw the distribution, Taour al Mamoun was present; the officer said he heard that Kafi Tayara was also present. Another SAF defector said he saw both 7.62x39 mm ammunition and 82 mm mortars being distributed in Kadugli in the same period. Interviews, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 49 Interviews with SPLM-N officers, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 50 Only partial estimations are available. Ezechiel Kuku Tolodi, an SPLM-N officer interviewed in Bentiu in February 2012, said the December 2011 attack on the Jaw area was conducted by SAF elements and a 600-strong PDF force.
- 51 After South Sudan's independence, the SPLA's 9th Division was renamed the 1st Division of the SPLM-N, but the name '9th Division' remains the most commonly used.
- 52 Interviews, South Kordofan, exact locations withheld, May 2012.
- 53 Figures roughly confirmed by a Khartoum-based military expert, interviewed in an undisclosed location, September 2012.
- 54 Interviews with SPLM-N officials, in South Kordofan and Juba, May 2012, and Western military observer close to Juba, June 2012.
- 55 Interviews with SPLA officers, Juba, and SPLM-N officers, South Kordofan, May 2012; interview with Khartoum-based military observer, location withheld, September 2012. See also Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, pp. 80–81).
- 56 Interviews with SPLM-N officers, exact locations withheld, May 2012; JEM South Kordofan leaders, various locations, May–August 2012; and Khartoum-based military expert, location withheld, September 2012. Another military expert, who is closer to Juba, gave a lower estimate of around 20,000. Interview in an undisclosed location, June 2012.
- 57 The number of Missiriya may have increased since then, through recruitment and Missiriya defections from SAF. New recruits reportedly include several hundred defectors of a JEM splinter group led by Missiriya leader Mohamed Bahr Hamadein. Interview with SPLM-N Missiriya leader, Addis Ababa, September 2012. See also Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 15).
- 58 These included the late Rahama Rahoma, Burri al Bushari, and Mahmoud Khater—the first Missiriya appointed as SPLA officers. Fadel joined the movement in 1989.
- 59 One of the Missiriya's main grievances is the 2005 suppression of 'their' West Kordofan State. Khartoum repeatedly promised to restore the state, most recently in December 2012, but faces opposition from the Hamar Arabs of north-western Kordofan, who would constitute the majority of the new state. They want their main centre, an-Nahud, as the new state capital, or West Kordofan to be limited to the sole south-western, Missiriya area. Hamar leaders said including their area in a West Kordofan dominated by the Missiriya would likely lead their youth to join Darfur rebels. The regime is wary of the Hamar because in 2008 JEM crossed their

- territory in a raid on Omdurman. According to the SPLM-N, ‘the real motives behind’ the decision to restore the West Kordofan state are ‘to isolate the western region, and in particular the oil producing areas, from any future political settlement. . . on the regions referred as the two areas in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and in the ongoing negotiations’ and ‘to draw the Misseriya on the government side. . . after having completely failed to mobilize [their] militias.’ The SPLM-N stated not to be ‘against the demands of [West Kordofan] citizens to have a separate state’ and even asserted their ‘right to self-determination’ and ‘independence from Khartoum,’ but said to ‘reject the motives... of the NCP to re-establish West Kordofan state at this particular time.’ See Karshom Nureddin (2012); interviews with South and North Kordofan intellectuals, various locations, September 2012–January 2013.
- 60 Interviews with SPLM-N Missiriya leaders, in South Sudan and South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 61 Interview with Hawazma politician, location withheld, September 2011.
- 62 Interviews with Hawazma military and political officers and politicians, South Kordofan, May 2012, and in an undisclosed location, September 2012.
- 63 Interviews with JEM members, South Kordofan–South Sudan border area, May 2012.
- 64 Interviews with JEM leaders, including Hassan Issa Ramadan, South Kordofan–South Sudan border area, May 2012. See also Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, pp. 73–74).
- 65 Interviews with JEM leaders, including Col. Mohammed Sherif Adam Shatta, South Kordofan–South Sudan border area, May 2012.
- 66 Interviews with JEM leaders, Juba, February and May 2012, and in an undisclosed location, July 2012.
- 67 See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, pp. 74–75).
- 68 See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 72).
- 69 Interviews with JEM officers, South Sudan; with SPLM-N officer, South Kordofan; with SPLA Brig. Gen. Abraham Jongroor, Bentiu, May 2012. Interview with Khartoum-based military observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 70 Interview with Khartoum-based military observer, location withheld, September 2012. See South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (2012).
- 71 Interview with JEM officers, South Kordofan–Unity state border, 20 May 2012. See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 74).
- 72 Interview with Suleiman Sendel, JEM’s general secretary for presidential affairs, and a witness to the bombing, Juba, February 2012.
- 73 See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, pp. 71–73).
- 74 JEM Chairman Jibril Ibrahim Mohamed, SLA-AW Chairman Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur, SLA-MM Chairman Minni Minawi, At Tom Musa Hajo, a dissident from the Democratic Unionist Party, and Nasr-ed-Din al Hadi al Mahdi, a dissident from the National Umma Party, were all appointed vice presidents of the coalition. Initially, the rotational chairmanship was supposed to first fall to one of the Darfurian movements, but their inability to agree obliged Malik Agar to take it. This situation might repeat itself after March 2013, when Malik’s one-year term normally ends.
- 75 ‘Political forces signatories to this charter work to overthrow the NCP regime in different ways, and above all by the means of peaceful, civil and democratic ways and the revolutionary armed struggle. . . It has been agreed that each signatory of this charter has the right to retain its means to topple the regime.’ The SRF agreed to specify that it ‘supports the continuation and escalation of peaceful demonstrations and its transformation into peaceful popular upris-

- ing as a major tool to overthrow the ruling regime of NCP. Sudan Revolutionary Front invites all Sudanese people to participate in the peaceful uprising against the regime, and affirms that it will call for an immediate and total cease-fire once the regime is ousted' (SudanJEM.com, 2013).
- 76 There was not unanimity on the last point. The Khartoum-based leadership of some of the religious parties, whose representatives signed the document, later disavowed it.
- 77 Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 72).
- 78 With the possible exception of a few troops, notably from the Missiriya, reportedly operating in south-western Kordofan under SLA-MM's banner. See ICG (2013, p. 21).
- 79 Interviews with SPLM-N officers, including members of the military leadership, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 80 While SPLM-N leaders say the movement was planning to limit its action to political and peaceful opposition—despite the fact that the May 2011 election results were considered unfair—many officers interviewed also recognized that SPLM-N military personnel were prepared for a military confrontation with the government. Not everyone was as eager to go to war. Abdel-Aziz was said to be in favour, while his chief of staff, Jagod Mukwar, was reportedly initially reluctant. Interviews with SPLM-N officers and Western observers, various locations, May–September 2012.
- 81 One of these tanks was reportedly destroyed during an attack on Tolodi. Interviews with SPLM-N officers, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 82 This section is based on the authors' physical inspections of stockpiles captured from SAF and Khartoum-allied paramilitary groups in the first half of 2012 in South Kordofan and South Sudan's border areas, as well as interviews conducted with the rebel leadership and other armed actors. In May 2012, the authors inspected 11 weapon stores held by rebels, and interviewed officers from both movements.
- 83 JEM reportedly destroyed one or two tanks captured in Hejlj in April 2012. Interview with JEM leader, location withheld, July and August 2012.
- 84 These estimates were derived from direct observation and data from at least two distinct sources.
- 85 The data only refers to equipment captured by SPLM-N and JEM in South Kordofan and the border area with South Sudan, not in their other 'fronts' of, respectively, Blue Nile and Darfur.
- 86 According to unverified reports obtained by the Small Arms Survey, SPLM-N captured two additional APC vehicles during the battles fought in Deldeko, both located a few kilometres north-east of Kadugli, on 10 and 12 December 2012. See Small Arms Survey (2013).
- 87 Two tanks were captured in Jaw, two in al Ithemir, one in al Hamra, and one in Abu Hashim. Interviews with SPLM-N officers, South Kordofan, May 2012. During the battles fought in Roseires and Deldeko in December 2012, SPLM-N reportedly captured four or five additional T-55 tanks and destroyed one or two of those operated by SAF. The authors could not independently verify this information. See Small Arms Survey (2013).
- 88 Inspections and interviews with SPLA 4th Division and senior military intelligence officers, Bentiu, South Sudan, 25–27 May 2012. Some captured vehicles were seen being used by commanders in Bentiu. Civilian vehicles, including some from oil companies, were also captured and recycled for trade and transport of passengers in Unity state.
- 89 Efforts to trace the equipment observed in May 2012 were still ongoing at the time of writing. Marking codes visible on many items suggest they were manufactured during the 1980s and 1990s.

- 90 The authors observed a very limited number of NATO-standard weapons, including one G3 (Heckler and Koch) 7.62 mm assault rifle, and one FN-MAG type 7.62 mm machine gun, marked with Arabic characters. Both were seen on 16 May 2012 in Heiban.
- 91 The use of similar equipment in conflict-affected border areas has been extensively documented by the HSBA. See Small Arms Survey (2011b; 2012a; 2012d; 2012f).
- 92 Interview, military observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 93 Interviews with medical personnel, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 94 See Small Arms Survey (2012d).
- 95 Written correspondence with the Bulgarian national authorities, October 2012. The presence of similar equipment in SAF stockpiles had been previously documented in Small Arms Survey (2011c).
- 96 See Small Arms Survey (2012f; 2012g).
- 97 As noted in recent publications on the Sudanese conflicts, large quantities of ammunition from the same manufacturing lots were also documented in Darfur. See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012); AI (2012); Small Arms Survey (2012c); and UNSC (2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2011).
- 98 Direct observation during the May 2012 mission in South Kordofan and South Sudan.
- 99 Physical inspections in May 2012, in South Kordofan, and data obtained through tracing requests, June–August 2012.
- 100 Written correspondence with the Dutch authority for export control and strategic goods, October 2012.
- 101 Physical inspections in May 2012, in South Kordofan, and data obtained through tracing requests, June–August 2012.
- 102 Written correspondence with the mother company of the exporting entity, Van Vliet Trucks Holland BV, July 2012, and with the Dutch authority for export control and strategic goods, October 2012.
- 103 Written correspondence with the Dutch authority for export control and strategic goods, October 2012.
- 104 Written correspondence with mother company of the exporting entity, Van Vliet Trucks Holland BV, July 2012.
- 105 Written correspondence with BAFA, July 2012.
- 106 Written correspondence with BAFA, July 2012.
- 107 Written correspondence with the Dutch authority for export control and strategic goods, October 2012.
- 108 Written correspondence with the Dutch authority for export control and strategic goods, October 2012.
- 109 Sudan never endorsed the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. Additional elements on the Convention are available at UNOG (n.d.a)
- 110 Landmines were seen in Jebel Kuwa, close to Tess, on 12 May 2012, and Heiban on 16 May 2012. See also Small Arms Survey (2012d).
- 111 Authors' observations and interviews with SPLM-N officers, South Kordofan, May 2012. 7-72 mines were observed in Jebel Kuwa on 12 May 2012, while GLD-215s were seen in the Heiban SPLM-N weapons store on 16 May 2012.
- 112 See Small Arms Survey (2012b).
- 113 Interview with SPLM-N official, Kaoda, May 2012.



- 114 Document captured by the SPLM-N, reportedly during the al Hamra battle, in July 2011, and seen by the authors in May 2012.
- 115 Sudan never endorsed the December 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. For more on the convention, see UNOG (n.d.b).
- 116 See Small Arms Survey (2012).
- 117 See *Independent* (2012) and HRW (2012).
- 118 See Sudan Tribune (2012d).
- 119 Interview with an SPLM-N private, who was reportedly injured by the incendiary bomb, Mother of Mercy Hospital, Gidel, South Kordofan, 14 May 2012.
- 120 Interview with woman reportedly injured by an incendiary bomb, Mother of Mercy Hospital, Gidel, South Kordofan, 14 May 2012. See also Tubiana (2012).
- 121 Interviews, Mother of Mercy hospital, Gidel, South Kordofan, 14 May 2012.
- 122 Sudan signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction on May 1999. Provisions contained in the Convention are legally binding for Sudan since 23 June 1999.
- 123 A SPLM-N doctor reported similar cases after the al Hamra and Atmur battles, east of Kadugli, in July and December 2011. He reportedly treated 25 similar cases and six or seven patients died. Interview, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 124 According to medical personnel, symptoms included total or partial temporary paralysis, partial blindness, temporary deafness, inability to speak, breathing problems, nausea, vomiting blood, nose bleeds, and diarrhea. Birds and insects also reportedly died in the affected areas. According to the SPLA's Lt. Gen. James Gatduel Gatluak, 10 SPLA soldiers died after suffering paralysis during the Hejlj battle. Interviews with Gatduel Gatluak, Bentiu, May 2012, and with medical personnel, South Kordofan and Bentiu, May 2012.
- 125 According to SPLM-N officers and privates, interviewed in South Kordofan in May 2012, 35 mm grenades captured along with QLZ87 launchers were reused the same day by the SPLM-N against SAF positions in the Tolodi area. After the shelling, SPLM-N intelligence officers, who listened to SAF radio communications, heard SAF reporting that the SPLM-N was now using 'chemical weapons'.
- 126 One of the Antonovs operated by the government for civilian missions crashed near Talodi on 19 August 2012. All the passengers died, including SAF, police and NISS officers, PDF leaders, and government officials. The pilot was Russian, the navigator was from Tajikistan, and the flight engineer was from Armenia. According to testimonies gathered between October 2011 and May 2012, the crews of Antonov aircraft used for military operations are Sudanese nationals. See SSP (2012).
- 127 Several observers, including Radio Dabanga field correspondents, Sudanese civil society organizations, the UN Security Council's Panel of Experts, and the hybrid peacekeeping operation UNAMID, say aerial operations have been extensively used in Darfur over the past years. Khartoum said air strikes in Western and Northern Bahr al Ghazal states in South Sudan between 2010 and 2012 were justified by the presence of armed movements from Darfur who were using South Sudan as a safe haven. For more on the Darfur-Bahr al Ghazal campaign, see Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012). Other cross-border air strikes have also been reported since the outbreak of war between the government and the SPLM-N in Blue Nile in the Upper Nile state of South Sudan.
- 128 See UNSC (2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2011) and Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012).

- 129 See UNSC (2009, paras. 194–201).
- 130 This information could be read on the plate bearing the serial number of the downed aircraft. See also Small Arms Survey (2012d).
- 131 Footage from the last set of recordings was seen in May 2012. Testimonies were also gathered during interviews with JEM, SPLM-N, and SPLA officers in South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012. See also Small Arms Survey (2012d) and Tubiana (2012).
- 132 Direct observation of remnants and unexploded bombs in Kaoda, Um Durein, Yida, and Bentiu, February and May 2012.
- 133 In the same period, a number of ground battles occurred between SAF and SPLA units in the disputed Hejlil area and further south around the 1956 border between South Kordofan and Unity state. Interviews with SPLA 4th Division senior officers and the Pariang County Commissioner, in Unity state, May 2012. Medical data collected in late May 2012 at the Bentiu Hospital, where some SPLA elements were treated, further corroborated these reports.
- 134 During raids over Bentiu, SAF MiGs and Sukhoi jets failed to destroy the bridge connecting Rubkona and Bentiu, only damaging nearby civilian facilities.
- 135 This conclusion was confirmed by a number of interviews with humanitarian actors, refugees, and displaced individuals in Juba, Bentiu, and Yida refugee camp, in February and May 2012.
- 136 Interview with military observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 137 SRRA (2012). According to a SPLM-N humanitarian official, the increase in the number of bombings reported in late 2012 might be partly due to the fact that ‘we’re also becoming better at keeping records’. Interview, Juba, November 2012.
- 138 Mother of Mercy Hospital records, accessed in Gidel, 14 May 2012.
- 139 Bentiu hospital records, covering 26 March–30 April 2012, viewed on 24 and 25 May 2012. The hospital admitted 170 individuals, including military personnel, for treatment of injuries caused by the different SAF/SPLA confrontations in Unity state and the Hejlil area during the same period.
- 140 Interviews, Addis Ababa, Juba, and South Kordofan, December 2011, January, February, and May 2012.
- 141 ICG (2008, p. 11); Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 80).
- 142 ICG (2008, p. 11).
- 143 Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 80).
- 144 Interview, SPLA officer, Juba, November 2012.
- 145 Interviews with participants to the meeting, including Abdel-Aziz, Juba and Addis Ababa, November and December 2012.
- 146 Interview with Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, Addis Ababa, December 2012.
- 147 Interviews with SPLM-N officer, Juba, February 2012, and international analyst, Juba, November 2012. See also Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 81).
- 148 Interview, Addis Ababa, December 2012.
- 149 Interview, Addis Ababa, December 2012.
- 150 This was reportedly decided in the February 2011 SPLM political bureau meeting mentioned above. Interviews, SPLM-N officials, undisclosed locations, November–December 2012.
- 151 Interview, Juba, November 2012.
- 152 Interviews with SPLM-N officers, undisclosed locations, November–December 2012.
- 153 The transfers were confirmed by Western observers, including a Khartoum-based military observer who indicated that, since September 2011, the payments were not necessarily just

- salaries but also included lump sums given to commanders. Interviews with Western analysts based in Juba and Khartoum, Juba, May 2012, and in an undisclosed location, September 2012. Interview with JEM official, undisclosed location, July 2012. See also Small Arms Survey (2012, pp. 1–2).
- 154 Interviews with international observers, GoS, GoSS, and SPLM-N officials, Juba and Addis Ababa, November 2012–January 2013. See also ICG (2013, p. 34).
- 155 Observations in South Kordofan and South Sudan; interviews with SPLM-N officials, including Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012. See Tubiana (2012), quoting Abdel-Aziz: ‘This war is much easier for us than the first war. This time, we were prepared, we were armed, and we had the guns at hand.’
- 156 Although certainly a violation of the CPA, such support cannot be considered as one from a government to a foreign rebel movement. Similarly, boxes of ammunition marked with Uganda as consignee and observed by the Small Arms Survey in the hands of the SPLM-N in both South Kordofan and Blue Nile cannot be considered a clear indication of military support from Uganda (or from South Sudan, as they might have transited through South Sudan territory and could well have originated from already available SPLA-controlled stockpiles), as nothing indicates they were not already in possession of 9th and 10th Divisions before South Sudan’s independence (authors’ observations, Blue Nile, December 2012; and Small Arms Survey, 2013). According to a Western analyst close to Juba, material support was already kept to a minimum in the months preceding independence (interview, Juba, November 2012).
- 157 Another indication that the SPLM-N does not need external supplies in ammunition is that, while trade in ammunition from government areas to rebel areas used to take place during the civil war, it is no longer reported. During the war, Nuba rebels gave livestock to Arabs in exchange for ammunition. Clandestine trading between Arab traders in government-controlled areas and rebel-administered areas has resumed, but the main commodities appear to be fuel and food items, which are scarce in rebel areas. Interviews with SPLM-N leaders and Arab traders, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 158 Observations and interviews, including with a Khartoum-based military observer, undisclosed location, September 2012.
- 159 Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 65).
- 160 See also UNSC (2013, p. 18). Note, however, that the authors found no evidence of the Panel’s claims that a JEM base of 800 fighters and 60–80 vehicles was located between Rubkona and the Bentiu airstrip in 2012.
- 161 Observations and interviews with humanitarian actors, Bentiu, Rubkona, and Yida, February and May 2012.
- 162 Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 63).
- 163 Observations in South Kordofan and South Sudan; interviews with SPLM-N officials, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012.
- 164 Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, pp. 74–75).
- 165 This movement was noted by SAF, whose soldiers relocated some equipment to Kharasana to strengthen its defences. Interview with Khartoum-based military observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 166 Interviews with South Sudan army and military intelligence officers, Bentiu, May 2012, and Khartoum-based military observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 167 Interviews with JEM officers, South Kordofan–South Sudan border, May 2012.

- 168 Interview with Khartoum-based military observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 169 Interviews with SRF officers and combatants, and civilian witnesses, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012; interviews with SRF leader, location withheld, July and August 2012. See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 74).
- 170 Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 99, endnote 212).
- 171 Interviews with SPLA officers, a GoSS official, and a local journalist, Bentiu and Pariang, May 2012.
- 172 Hospital register, seen by the authors.
- 173 The aim of the attack might have been to sabotage North-South negotiations in Addis Ababa, with or without the approval of Khartoum. Interviews with military intelligence officer, Bentiu; GoSS official, Pariang, May 2012. Interview with Western military observer close to the SPLA, location withheld, June 2012.
- 174 The three were reportedly members of Maj. Gen. Peter Gadet and Paulino Matip Nyal's South Sudan Unity Movement/ Army (SSUM/A), before it joined the government. They were later said to be allied with Lt. Gen. George Athor. Interviews with GoSS, SPLA, and military intelligence officers, Unity state, May 2012; UNMISS confidential documents.
- 175 Interview with GoSS official, Pariang, May 2012.
- 176 See Boswell (2012) and Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 75). JEM was led by Fadel Mohamed Rahoma, uncle of SPLA Missiriya commander Bokora Mohamed Fadel, who is said to have also been fighting in the area.
- 177 Interview, Bentiu, May 2012.
- 178 Interviews with SPLA officers, including Brig. Gen. Abraham Jongroor, who took part in the attack, Bentiu, May 2012. Interview with Khartoum-based observer, location withheld, September 2012.
- 179 Hospital register seen by the authors.
- 180 Interview with Brig. Gen. Abraham Jongroor, head of the commandos, who took part in the attack on Kilo 23, Juba, November 2012.
- 181 James Gatduel Gatluak was once one of the leaders of the SSUM/A. Interviews with SPLA officers and a local journalist, Bentiu, May 2012. Interviews with military observers close to Juba and Khartoum, locations withheld, June and September 2012.
- 182 Interviews with SPLM-N and JEM officers, some of whom were present during the fighting, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012. See Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 75).
- 183 Interviews with GoS source and JEM leader, locations withheld, July and August 2012. Interview with South Sudanese military intelligence officer, Bentiu, May 2012.
- 184 This is backed by SPLM-N Missiriya and non-Missiriya officers as well as JEM officers. Interviews, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012.
- 185 See discussion on page 28.
- 186 Authors observations and interviews with SPLM-N Missiriya leaders, South Kordofan, May 2012, and Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, Addis Ababa, December 2012. See also ICG (2013, p. 25).
- 187 Interviews with SFR leaders in July and August 2012 suggest that JEM unsuccessfully tried to convince some SPLA officers not to withdraw. JEM said the SPLM-N was ready, with SAF busy in Hejlj, to launch an offensive on Kadugli, but that the South's withdrawal also forced them to change plans. Abdel-Aziz al Hilu denied this. JEM also said South Sudan had warned the SPLM-N, but not its own fighters, of the withdrawal. Interviews with JEM leaders, locations withheld, July–August 2012, and with Abdel-Aziz al Hilu, Addis Ababa, December 2012.

- 188 As a result of Khartoum's refusal, international mediators recommended moving the line further South, excluding the Difra (Defra) oil field, and getting close to the Kiir/Bahr al Arab river, Khartoum's favoured border since the Naivasha talks. See Craze (2011, p. 17).
- 189 Johnson (2010, pp. 2–3, 6) and Gramizzi and Tubiana (2012, p. 99).
- 190 Interviews with SPLM-N Missiriya leaders, South Sudan, May 2012.
- 191 Interview with GoS official, location withheld, October 2012.
- 192 Interviews, Addis Ababa, September 2012. See Tubiana (2012).
- 193 Interview with GoS official, location withheld, October 2012.
- 194 Interviews with GoS official and Khartoum-based politician, locations withheld, October 2012.  
Interview with SPLM-N official, Addis Ababa, September 2012.
- 195 Interview with GoS official, location withheld, October 2012.
- 196 Interview with SPLM-N leaders, Addis Ababa, September 2012.

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# The Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and current contributions from the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Survey is grateful for past support received from the Governments of France, New Zealand, and Spain. The Survey also wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance it has received over the years from foundations and many bodies within the UN System.

The objectives of the Small Arms Survey are to: serve as the principal international source of impartial and public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence; act as a resource centre for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists in terms of information and research on small arms and armed violence issues; be an independent monitor of national, international, and non-governmental policy initiatives on small arms and armed violence; be an outlet for policy-relevant research on small arms and armed violence issues; act as a forum and clearinghouse for the sharing of information; and disseminate best practice measures and initiatives dealing with small arms and armed violence issues. The Survey also sponsors field research and information-gathering efforts, especially in affected states and regions. The project has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

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Launched in 2005, the Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan is a leading source of empirical research on small arms and light weapons and armed violence in the two countries. Administered by the Small Arms Survey, the HSBA was developed in cooperation with the Canadian government, the United Nations Mission in Sudan, the United Nations Development Programme, and a wide array of international and Sudanese and South Sudanese partners. Through the active generation and dissemination of timely field research, the project supports violence reduction initiatives, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes, incentive schemes for civilian arms collection, as well as security sector reform and arms control interventions across Sudan and South Sudan. The HSBA also offers policy-relevant advice on redressing insecurity.

HSBA *Working Papers* are designed to provide in-depth analysis of security-related issues in Sudan and South Sudan and along their borders. The HSBA also generates shorter *Issue Briefs*, which provide snapshots of baseline information in a timely and reader-friendly format. Both series are available in English and Arabic at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org). In addition, the project posts monthly 'Facts and Figures' reports on key security issues at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/facts-figures.php](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/facts-figures.php).

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