

## The Sudan Consortium

*African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan*

### **The Impact of Aerial Bombing of Civilian Settlements in Southern Kordofan Update October 2013**

The Sudan Consortium works with a trusted group of local Sudanese partners who have been working on the ground in Southern Kordofan since the current conflict began in late 2011. All the attacks referred to in this report were launched against areas where there was no military presence and which were clearly identifiable as civilian in character. **We believe that this information provides strong circumstantial evidence that civilians are being directly and deliberately targeted by the Sudanese armed forces in Southern Kordofan.**

During September 2013 the number of air strikes launched by the Sudanese government against the civilian population in Southern Kordofan showed a marked increase when compared with August.

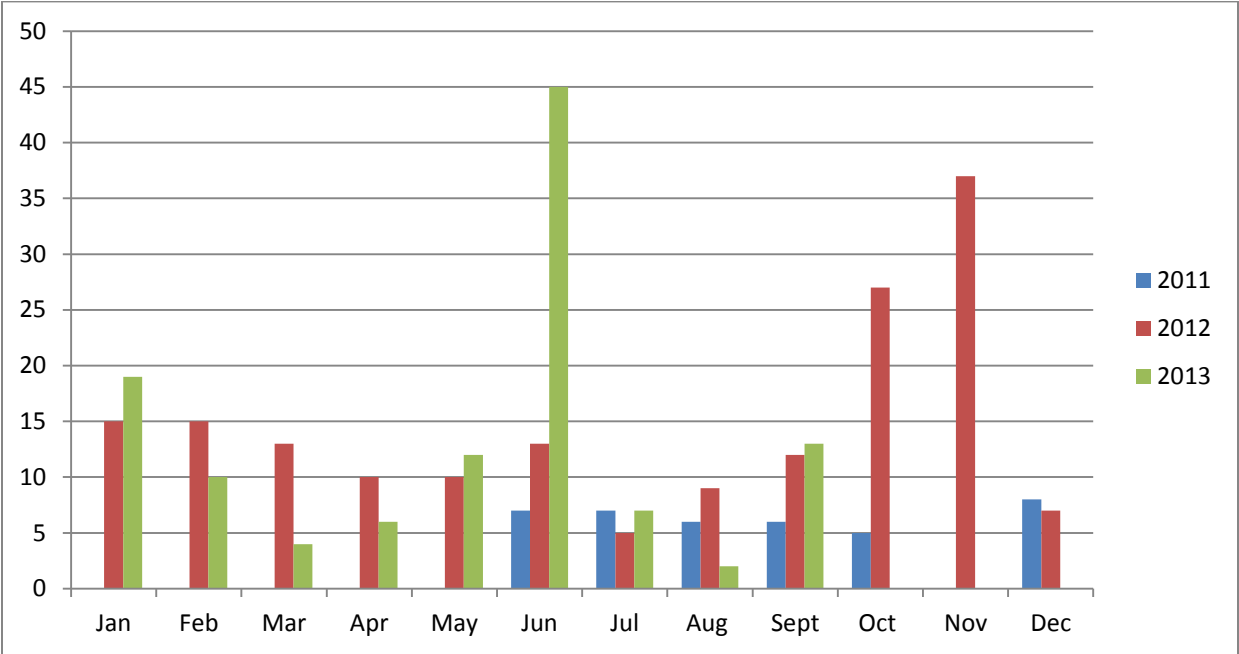
This increase in attacks is consistent with patterns observed since the conflict in Southern Kordofan began in 2011, whereby the Sudanese government has previously intensified up its attacks on the civilian population in opposition-held areas to coincide with the approach of the harvesting season.

In this context, the fertile county of Um Dorein was particularly heavily targeted by the Sudanese Air Force in September, with 33 bombs being dropped in the course of 11 separate air attacks on civilian settlements. In addition to inflicting civilian casualties (one woman was killed, and one man and four children injured in these attacks in September), the air strikes also targeted areas of cultivated land, and bombs dropped by the Sudanese Air Force damaged or destroyed significant areas of vital food crops being grown throughout the county.

As noted in previous reports by the Sudan Consortium, the timing of these bombing attacks to coincide with the approach of the harvesting season appears to indicate a deliberate and on-going intention on behalf of the Sudanese government to disrupt the cultivation of food crops thereby exacerbating the already high levels of food insecurity which the civilian population is experiencing in opposition held areas of Southern Kordofan.

This seasonal pattern of attacks is illustrated in the chart below. The surge in attacks recorded during July 2013 (the planting season) was particularly striking, and the increase in attacks through September this year mirrors the trend observed in 2012, and provides a strong indication that the Sudanese government is likely once again to significantly increase its attacks on civilian areas to coincide with the harvesting season in October/November.

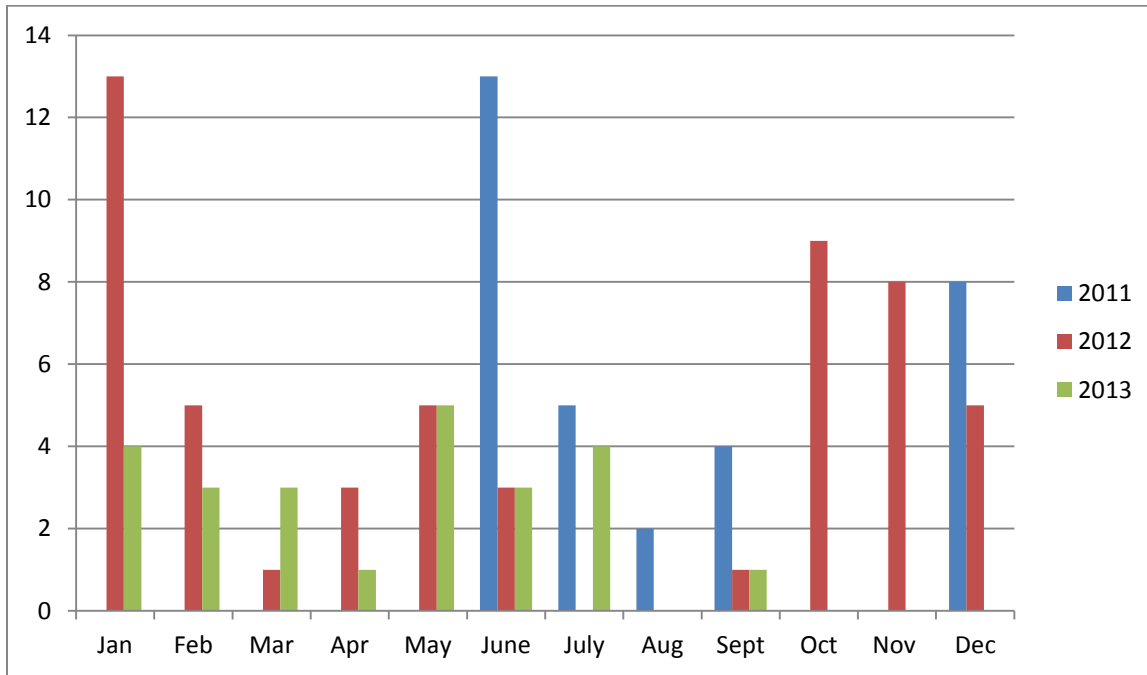
**Bombing attacks on civilian settlements: June 2011-September 2013**



Since the conflict began in June 2012, the effect of such targeting has been both to destroy substantial amounts of newly planted and/or mature crops, but, more significantly, to deter farmers from cultivating their fields at critical times during the crop cycle, for fear of being killed or injured in an air attack.

Whilst the civilian population in Southern Kordofan has developed its own protection strategies to mitigate the effects of these air attacks (including digging ‘foxholes’ in which they can seek shelter) significant numbers of civilians continue to be killed or injured in these attacks.

**Civilians killed by aerial bombardment in Southern Kordofan: June 2011 – September 2013**



**Civilians injured by aerial bombardment: June 2011 – September 2013**

