

The Sudan Consortium

African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan

The Impact of Aerial Bombing of Civilian Settlements in Southern Kordofan September 2013

As the African Union Peace and Security Council prepares to meet in New York on 23 September to consider the situation in Sudan, conflict continues in Southern Kordofan for the third consecutive year. Civilians continue to suffer from indiscriminate bombardment. As noted by the Sudan Consortium its August 2013 Human Rights Update, there was an increase in attacks on the fertile land of Delami County during the planting season, which may exacerbate the high levels of food insecurity which the population is already experiencing.

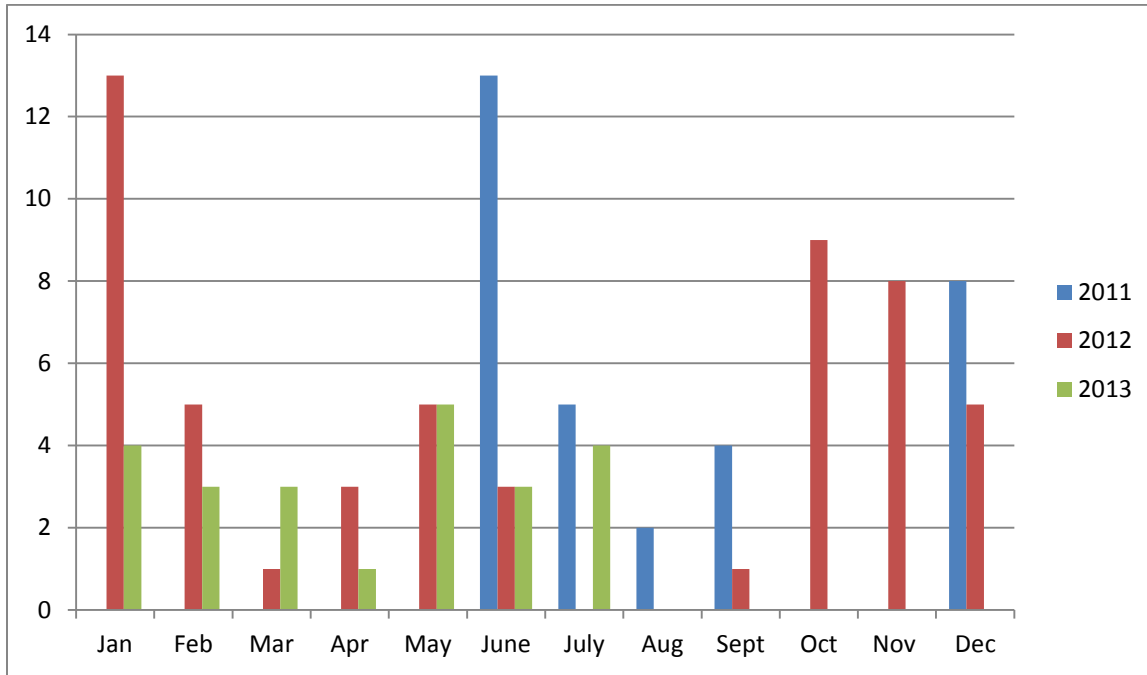
These serious attacks continued in August. On consecutive Sundays during mid-August 2013, the Sudanese Air Force carried out two separate bombing attacks on villages in Heiban and Um Dorein Counties in Southern Kordofan

In both cases the attacks were carried out on areas clearly identifiable as civilian in character. On this occasion there were no casualties reported from the ground in either attack, although the residents of Tangal (the village attacked in Um Dorein) were particularly fortunate to avoid death or injury, as the bombs landed close to the local Episcopal Church and within 200 metres of the village primary school and health centre.

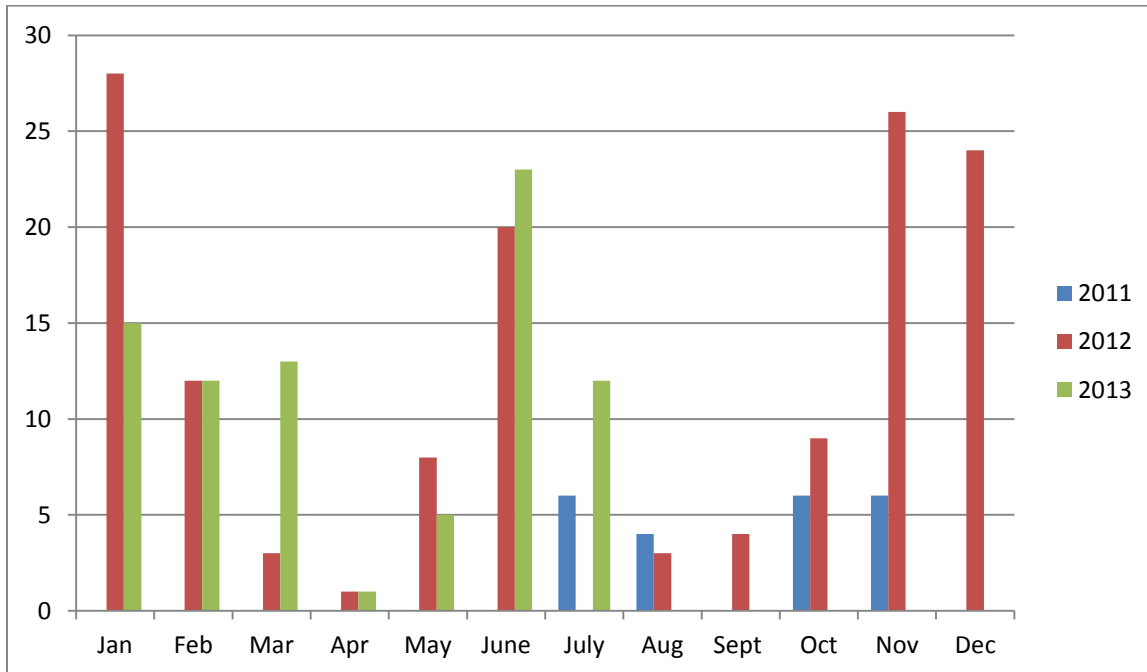
Over the last two years of the conflict, many inhabitants of Southern Kordofan have been less fortunate in avoiding injury, and whilst the civilian population has developed its own coping strategies to mitigate the effects of air attacks (including digging “foxholes” in which they can seek shelter) large numbers of civilians have been killed or injured in these bombing attacks.

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. **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.**

Civilians killed by aerial bombardment: June 2011 – August 2013



Civilians injured by aerial bombardment: June 2011 – August 2013

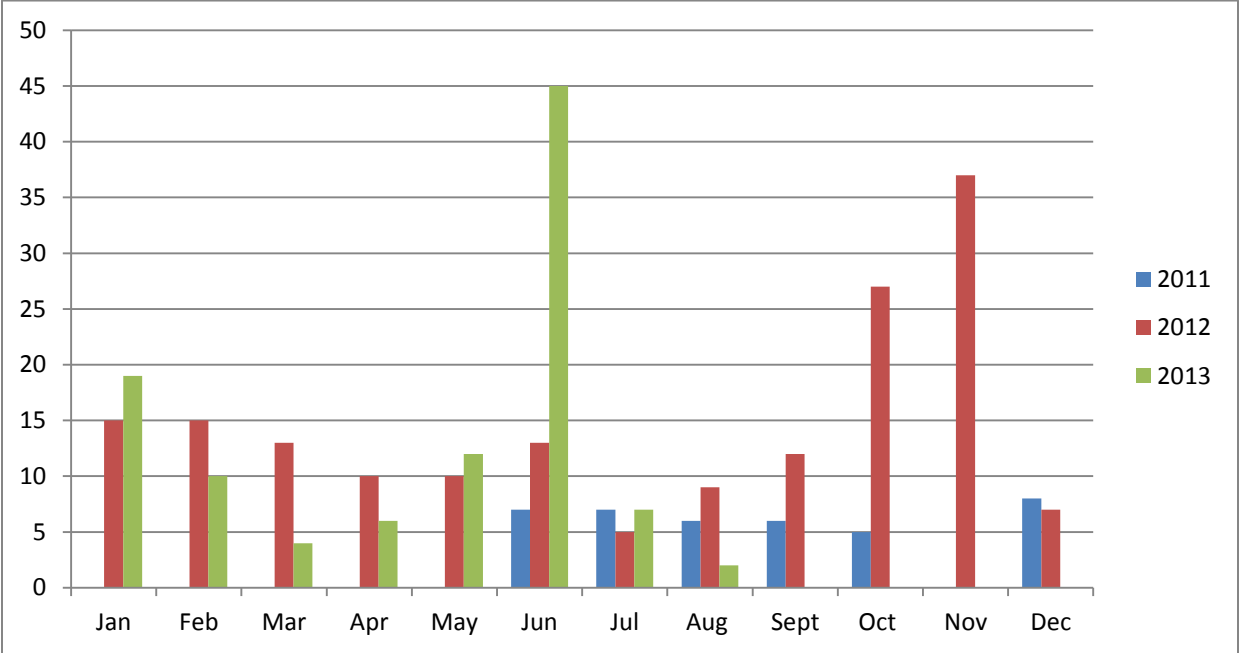


Although the number and intensity of air attacks on civilian areas recorded in August 2013 is less than in July, this reduction is consistent with patterns observed in 2012, when the Sudanese Government intensified its attacks on civilian areas during the planting and harvesting seasons (June and October respectively) and reduced them correspondingly during the growing season of July through to September. Although complete data for September 2013 is not yet available, early indications are that the number of attacks is rising as the harvesting season approaches. Monitors on the ground have also noted that, although these attacks are normally carried out by Antonov bomber aircraft flying at high altitude, in mid-September the Sudanese Air Force deployed a new type of fast jet aircraft (which uses more sophisticated weaponry and can deliver bombs more accurately) in an attack launched against cultivated fields in Umserdiba, Um Dorein County.

The timing of these bombing attacks in both 2012 and 2013 to coincide with the agricultural cycle appears to indicate a deliberate and on-going intention on behalf of the Sudanese government to disrupt the planting and harvesting of food crops in a region where crop cultivation has, in any event been affected by periods of drought in recent months.

This seasonal pattern of attacks is illustrated in the chart below, with the surge in attacks in June 2013 (this year’s planting season) being particularly striking.

Bombing attacks on civilian settlements in Southern Kordofan: June 2011-August 2013

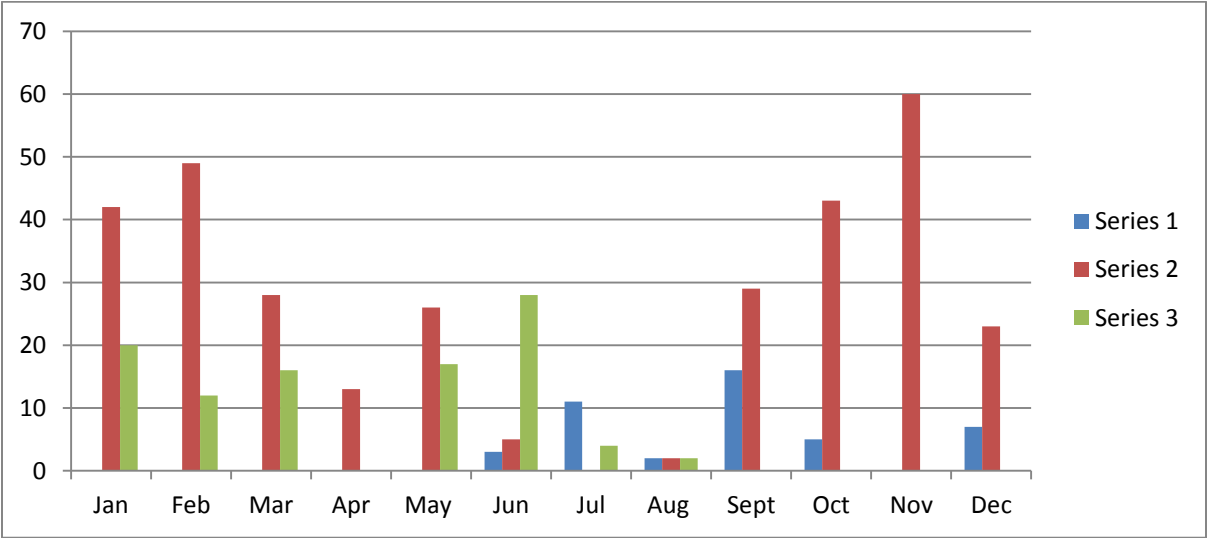


Since the conflict began in June 2012, the effect of such targeting has been both to destroy substantial amounts of newly planted and/or mature crops, but, more significantly, to deter farmers from

cultivating their fields at critical times during the crop cycle, for fear of being killed or injured in an air attack.

In addition to the destruction of crops, the attacks have also killed large numbers of livestock further limiting the capacity of the civilian population to feed and sustain itself.

**Number of livestock killed as a result of aerial bombardment in Southern Kordofan:
June 2011-August 2013**



The Sudan Consortium therefore calls on the African Union Peace and Security Council to demand action leading to the immediate cessation of hostilities in Southern Kordofan and the provision of full and unhindered humanitarian assistance to those who need it, especially those located in rebel-held areas. The suffering of innocent civilians in these regions needs to be dealt with as a matter of utmost urgency.