



11.11.2011

## SUDAN Accusation of bombing refugee camp in south following presidential announcement of war readiness

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An airstrike on a refugee camp in Unity state, South Sudan, on November 10 has been attributed to the northern Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) by South Sudan officials and witnesses, bolstering concerns that war may reignite between Sudan and the new nation of South Sudan. This follows Sudanese President Al-Bashir's aggressive comments on November 6 indicating Khartoum's readiness to engage in further warfare.

Taban Deng, governor of Unity state, accused Khartoum of carrying out the attack on the Yida refugee camp. Yida is home to about 20,000 refugees from the Nuba Mountains, a region that has faced ongoing aerial and ground assaults from the SAF since June this year. A spokesman for the SAF has denied bombing Yida.

The bombing comes a few days after a rally in Al-Damazin, the state capital of the Blue Nile State, on November 6, where Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir had warned that his country was running out of patience in the face of alleged "continued provocations" by South Sudan, adding that Khartoum was ready to return to war. Al-Bashir's warning came after the northern Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) seized control of Kurmuk town in the border area of Blue Nile State, previously the stronghold of the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N), on November 3.

On November 5, Khartoum announced it had lodged a second complaint with the UN Security Council accusing South Sudan of supporting opposition fighters in the border-states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, where Khartoum has been waging war since June and September respectively. The government of South Sudan has repeatedly denied the claim.

The UNHCR estimates that nearly 29,000 civilians have fled the conflict in Blue Nile to seek refuge in Ethiopia and South Sudan. The refugees insist they were targeted due to their ethnicity, corroborating other eyewitness reports and a leaked UN report of July. In both border regions, the SAF has been making use of counter-insurgency tactics previously employed in South Sudan and in Darfur, including ground and air offensives that target civilians, and the denial of access to international humanitarian aid organizations.

According to an SAF statement, Khartoum's offensives in the border-states are being waged in order to "eliminate the remnants of the SPLM", the Sudan People's Liberation Movement; however the air and ground offensives have thus far targeted as many civilian as military targets.

After conflict erupted in the oil-rich region of Abyei in May, following an invasion by northern forces, an agreement between Sudan and South Sudan in June mandated a UN peacekeeping force to monitor the flashpoint area. Both parties agreed to remove their own troops from the region by September 30. However the UN force is not fully deployed and the parties have not yet fully withdrawn their troops.

CSW's Special Ambassador Stuart Windsor said, "The muted international response to recent events in Sudan has allowed the northern regime to distract local attention from its economic and political failures by targeting civilians in Blue Nile and South Kordofan and threatening renewed war with South Sudan. Now refugees from these conflicts are being pursued into South Sudan. The international community must make it clear that military action against South Sudan will not be tolerated, and it must remain vigilant, using any remaining leverage to

compel Sudan to end the attacks on its own civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and to allow humanitarian access to both areas. The international community must also ensure the removal of all Sudanese troops from Abyei, in accordance with the agreement signed by both parties in Addis Ababa on June 20.”

**Notes to Editors:**

1. Since the National Congress Party (NCP), came to power in Sudan in 1989, its narrow Arabist and Islamist agenda has resulted in the systematic marginalization of various regions and the eruption of armed conflict; most recently in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.
2. On 9 November, President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir once more denied the claim that the South is supporting the SPLM/A in the North and accusing President Bashir of seeking to deflect away from his own internal problems by blaming other parties for it.