South Sudan-Sudan Relations in the Light of Current Conflicts and Border Disputes

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The 2012 South Sudan–Sudan border war was an armed conflict between the states of Sudan and the South Sudan in 2012 over oil-rich regions between the South Sudan's Unity and the Sudan's. South Kordofan. The oil rich region Heglig is well under the control of the Republic of Sudan. Certain areas involved, notably Abyei, are claimed by both sides as part of their sovereign territory. In September 2012, a series of eight agreements were made, resolving most aspects of the conflict. Background South Sudan's independence was preceded by two civil wars, from 1955-1972 and from 1983-2005 in which 2.5 million people were killed and more than 5 million externally displaced. Relations between these two states have been marked by conflict over the Greater Nile Oil Pipeline and the disputed region of Abyei, even though Sudan was the first state to recognise South Sudan. In January 2012, South Sudan shut down all of its oil fields in a row over the fees Sudan demanded to transit the oil. In May 2011, it was reported that Sudan had seized control of Abyei, a disputed oil-rich border region, with a force of approximately 5,000 soldiers after three days of clashes with South Sudanese forces. The precipitating factor was an ambush by the South killing 22 northern soldiers. The northern advance included shelling, aerial bombardment and numerous tanks. Initial reports indicated that over 20,000 people fled. The interim South Sudanese government declared this as an "act of war," and the United Nations sent an envoy to Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, to intervene. South Sudan says it has withdrawn its forces from Abyei. A deal on militarization was reached on 20 June 2011. The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, consisting of Ethiopian troops were deployed under a UNSC resolution from 27 June 2011. In early December 2011, Jau, a town in Unity state in South Sudan, was occupied by Sudanese forces. In early March 2012, the Sudanese Air Force bombed parts of Pariang county. Both countries accuse the other of supporting rebels on their soil as part of the ongoing internal conflict in Sudan and in South Sudan. Events 26–28 March South Sudanese repulsed from Heglig See also: First Battle of Heglig On 26 March, the Republic of Sudan claimed that South Sudan attacked the Heglig oilfield (called Panthou by South Sudan), located in the Sudanese state of South Kordofan, while South Sudan claims it was acting in self-defence after an attack on its territory. The following day, 27 March, the Sudanese Air Force launched a bombing raid on the Unity oilfield in the South Sudanese state of Unity, located to the north of the state capital, Bentiu. The Sudanese Army later attacked the disputed areas of Jau, Pan Akuach, and Teshwin, but were repelled by the South Sudanese Sudan People's Liberation Army.[28] South Sudanese artillery positions 20 kilometres north of Bentiu, which had been involved in the shelling of Heglig, were bombarded by artillery from the northern side of the border. The Republic of Sudan's Information Minister,
Abdallah Ali Masar, confirmed that South Sudanese had penetrated 10 km into Sudanese territory, but also claimed that Sudanese forces had repelled them and driven them back, and had taken several prisoners. South Sudanese troops were ordered by their government to disengage and withdraw from the disputed area on 28 March. Dead bodies and destroyed vehicles lay strewn in Heglig, the oilfield which was the site of bloody battles. Three bodies were identified as Southern Sudanese soldiers, while a tank as well as 4 pickup trucks were destroyed. On 31 March, Sudanese warplanes bombed the Southern forces positions on the border, although officials from the north said it was artillery, not aircraft involved in the attack. Early April: South Sudanese capture Heglig South Sudan claimed to have shot down a Sudanese MiG-29 warplane on 4 April over Unity state in South Sudan. The air raids reportedly took place near Heglig and forced an Al Jazeera camera crew to take cover, as Sudanese planes bombed an oil pipeline. The bombing did not apparently lead to any casualties or significant damage. The Sudanese government denied any bombing from the air had taken place and called the accusations "fabrications" by South Sudan.[37] The South Sudanese town of Teshwin, according to the South Sudanese armed forces, was shelled with artillery and warplanes by Sudan on 9 April. The town of Abiemnhom in Unity state was reportedly attacked by two brigades from the Sudanese army, which the south claimed was an attempt to seize its oil fields. At least four civilians were injured in the clashes, although there were no immediate reports of military casualties on either side. The South's government said that northern forces had breached the border accompanied by militias, but had been repelled. A Sudanese military spokesman later admitted that the Sudanese army had been defeated during a battle at Heglig and forced to retreat northwards. There were some reports that the fighting had broken out after Sudanese forces attempted to retake a border post lost to Southern forces two weeks previous. Colonel Khalid Sawarmi, spokesman for the Sudanese army, claimed that the Southern forces had taken control of the Heglig oil fields and the town of Heglig itself, given South Sudan victory in the Battle of Heglig. The Sudanese government said on 11 April that heavy fighting continued along the disputed border areas and the Sudanese army was reported to be trying to retake Heglig. Sudan announced they would use all legitimate means to retake the Heglig oil fields that fell to South Sudan the previous day. South Sudan said that they were holding defensive positions in Heglig, awaiting a Sudanese counterattack. The parliaments of both countries called for a mobilisation of their respective armed forces. Sudan also began a general mobilisation of its armed forces as South Sudanese forces penetrated as far north as 70 kilometres into Sudanese territory, according to Rahmatullah Mohamed Osman, Under Secretary for the Foreign Ministry of Sudan. After Heglig fell, the government in Khartoum said its forces had made a tactical retreat to Kharasanah, and despite having put up strong resistance, had been unable to overcome the "huge, well equipped forces" that had attacked the area. Sudanese forces were reported to be regrouping and preparing to try and retake Heglig. The Sudanese Revolutionary Front rebel group attacked the Sudanese army in Karshanah, where they had retreated following clashes by the South Sudanese Army. Vice President Al-Haj Adam of Sudan formally declared that a state of war existed between the two countries late on 11 April and declared that all negotiations between the two states were on hold. The next day, the
Sudanese Air Force bombed Bentiu, the capital of Unity State, in an attempt to destroy a strategic bridge using an Antonov An-26 transport plane converted into an improvised bomber, killing one South Sudanese soldier. Mid-April: Sudanese counter offensive South Sudanese forces began reinforcing their positions in Heglig on 13 April, whilst Sudan continued to mobilise its own forces. According to the South Sudanese government, the frontlines had remained static during the day. Sudanese forces claimed to be advancing on Heglig and that the situation would be dealt with "within hours." A spokesman of the Sudanese government said that its army was on the outskirts of Heglig, while South Sudan's government said that it would defend themselves if attacked. The Sudanese government spokesman also added that South Sudan failed to control "all of South Kordofan state." During Friday prayers on 13 April in Sudan, some sermons were reportedly hostile towards South Sudan, while television broadcasts included allegedly jihadi and patriotic songs. South Sudan’s Vice President Reik Machar said a Sudanese attempt to retake Heglig by force was halted 30 km north of the town. South Sudan claimed to have destroyed two tanks during the clashes. The Sudanese air force, operating two Sukhoi Su-25 jets, reportedly bombed Jau and Panakuach, as well as Heglig once again, killing five civilians. On 14 April, South Sudanese forces continued to advance northwards, and repelled a Sudanese counterattack on Kersanah. Southern troops moved to close all three roads to Heglig on 14 April. It was also reported that most facilities in Heglig had been damaged during the fighting. Two MiG-29's from the Sudanese Air Force swooped in low over Bentiu the same day in an attempt to destroy a bridge. The bombs narrowly missed their target and ended up killing four civilians and a soldier and wounding five others. The attack was widely believed to be an attempt to damage South Sudanese supply lines. Sudanese army units were reported to have reached a few kilometres from Heglig and that they were fighting with South Sudanese forces. The immediate objective was to "destroy the South's war machine", rather than enter Heglig itself. South Sudan disputed the north's version of events as propaganda, claiming that northern forces were still 30 kilometres (19 miles) from Heglig. On 15 April, the Sudan People's Liberation Army spokesman Philip Aguer claimed that after overnight clashes in Kelet South Sudan held on to its positions and destroyed two Sudanese tanks. Sudan shelled the western part of South Sudan's Upper Nile state during 15 April, in an apparent attempt to open up a new front. Sudanese troops crossed the border into South Sudan's Upper Nile state and briefly occupied the small town of Kuek, before being expelled by South Sudan's army. On 16 April, Sudan's parliament met and voted unanimously to declare that "South Sudan is an enemy of all Sudanese state agencies" The parliamentary speaker called for Sudan to mobilise all its resources to fight South Sudan and topple their government. Rabie Abdelaty, a spokesman for the Khartoum government, ruled out peace talks with the south, saying it would hurt national pride if Sudan did not take back Heglig by force. On 18 April, a new front opened up in the conflict, 100 miles (160 km) west of Heglig, resulting in seven South Sudanese soldiers and 15 Sudanese soldiers being killed. The clash was reportedly sparked when a South Sudanese soldier was shot dead when collecting water near the road between Aweil and Meiram. Late April: South Sudan leaves Heglig On 20 April, South Sudan announced it had begun a phased withdrawal from Heglig,
while Sudan claimed it took it by force. Afterwards, Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir held a victory rally in Khartoum. On 22 April, more fighting broke out on the border as Sudanese soldiers backed by tanks and artillery launched three waves of attacks six miles deep inside South Sudan. At least one South Sudanese soldier was killed and two wounded in the attack. Sudan bombed the town of Rubkona on 23 April, damaging several market stalls, in an attempt to destroy a bridge between Rubkona and neighbouring Bentiu. At least three people were killed in the raid. The following day, Kiir stated on a visit to China that Sudan had "declared war" on South Sudan.

Note: Since Sudan does not allow journalists into conflict areas, reports of the bombings and the conflict are by-and-large reported by sources in South Sudan or those allied with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army. Sudan claims that it has exclusively bombed South Sudanese military positions and denies all further allegations.

Negotiations
In a meeting with Egypt’s foreign minister on 15 April, Mohamed Kamel Amr, who had arrived in Khartoum to try and contain tensions, Omar Bashir ruled out any negotiations with South Sudan until the Southern forces vacated Heglig. According to mediator Thabo Mbeki, as of 22 May, both Sudans said they were ready to return to the negotiating table. Resolution The two parties recommenced negotiations in June 2012 under mediation by the African Union’s envoy Thabo Mbeki. On 27 September, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and South Sudanese President Salva Kiir signed eight agreements in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which led the way to resume important oil exports and create a six-mile demilitarised zone along their border. The agreements allows for the return of 350,000 barrels of South Sudanese oil to the world market. In addition, the agreements include an understanding on the parameters to follow in regards to demarcating their border, an economic-cooperation agreement and a deal to protect each other’s citizens. Certain issues remain unsolved and future talks are scheduled to resolve them. At the same time as the ongoing General debate of the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly on the same day, South Sudan was scheduled to speak. Vice President Riek Machar outlined what agreements were signed, but lamented the lack of a resolution on Abyei. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon commended the two leaders on reaching an agreement. Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn also praised the outcome and hoped it would build momentum.

Domestic response in Sudan: The President of the Republic of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, suspended a planned visit to South Sudan after the conflict broke out. Sudanese national radio announced that the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, would suspend his planned visit to the South Sudanese capital, Juba, as a result of the conflict. A summit between the leaders of the two countries had been planned to be held in Juba some time in April 2012, following on from the meeting of the political, military, and security committee of the
A meeting between South Sudan and Sudan on the subject of the disputed region of Abyei scheduled to have been held on 22 March had previously been postponed by Sudan. Vice President Al-Haj Adam of Sudan formally declared that a state of war existed between the two countries late on 11 April and declared that all negotiations between the two states were on hold. On 16 April, Sudan's parliament met and voted unanimously to declare that "South Sudan is an enemy of all Sudanese state agencies". The parliamentary speaker called for Sudan to mobilise all its resources to fight South Sudan and topple their government. Rabie Abdelaty, a spokesman for the Khartoum government, ruled out peace talks with the south, saying it would hurt national pride if Sudan did not take back Heglig by force. Sudan began a general mobilisation of its armed forces as South Sudanese forces penetrated as far north as 70 kilometres into Sudanese territory, according to Rahmatullah Mohamed Osman, Under Secretary for the Foreign Ministry. During Friday prayers on 13 April in Sudan, some sermons were reportedly hostile towards South Sudan, while television broadcasts included allegedly jihadi' and patriotic songs. Following South Sudan's withdrawal from Heglig, President Omar al-Bashir declared that there would be no negotiations with the "poisonous insects" (i.e. the South Sudanese). Later on, Bashir argued that the South Sudanese only understand the "language of guns and ammunition." Sudan's UN ambassador, Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman, argued that Sudan had the right to act in self-defense because "We have been targeted by... the South", adding that "Let me make it clear: We will not cross the international border and attack the South... inside their territories".

The President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, suggested that the Republic of Sudan was responsible for initiating the conflict, and that further clashes could lead to war: "This morning [the Sudanese] air force came and bombed areas in Unity state. After this intensive bombardment our forces were attacked by [the Sudanese military] and militia." It is a war that has been imposed on us again, but it is [the Sudanese] who are looking for it." The spokesman for the South Sudanese military suggested that the conflict was "the biggest confrontation since independence". Parliamentary Speaker[who?] called on people to prepare for war: "Khartoum might be meaning a real war ... if you don't defend yourself, you will be finished, so you should go and mobilise the people on [the] ground to be ready". Parliament later decided to raise military spending and bolster the army by cutting salaries of all deputies by 10% for three months. Fuel supplies began to run out in some filling stations in Juba around 15 April as huge queues of motorists tried to fill up as panic buying set in. International reactions- United Nations On 27 March, a spokesman for Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, called for the two countries to end the conflict and "utilise to the fullest extent existing political and security mechanisms to peacefully address their differences". On 23 April 2011, Ban Ki-moon condemned Sudan's bombing of border areas in South Sudan, demanding Khartoum cease all hostilities "as a matter of urgency". Arab League On 15 April 2012, the Arab Parliament called on South Sudan for restraint and to withdraw from the town of Heglig. A statement signed by Arab Parliament head Salem Deqbasi said that the Arab Parliament's bureau called on South Sudan to "heed the voice of
reason" and immediately pull its forces out of the areas it had occupied inside Sudanese territory, including Heglig. On 26 April, the Arab League escalated its rhetoric, condemning South Sudan's "aggression" and saying Heglig belongs to Sudan. The Arab League went further to say it supported Sudan's "right to defend itself", and condemned South Sudan's alleged support of rebels in Sudan. African Union On 25 April 2012, the African Union condemned Sudan's bombing of parts of South Sudan, and called on both sides to cease all hostilities. The Peace and Security Council also put forth a 7-point roadmap in which the two sides would be given two weeks to restart negotiations. The AU urged both sides to refrain from "inflammatory statements and propaganda that could fuel the conflict". Iran On 15 April 2012, according to IRIB World Service, an Iran Broadcasting channel, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said that Iran fully monitors the developments in the region, and calls on South Sudan to immediately and unconditionally pull back its forces and return to its territory behind the designated borders.[101] In March an Iranian surveillance drone crashed in Sudan after being fired upon by South Sudanese-backed rebels. Kenya On 27 March 2012, the President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, suggested that Kenya could mediate between the two countries, stating "Kenya is keen on good and stable relations between the two countries". United Kingdom On 6 May 2012, Africa Minister Henry Bellingham supported the African Union-led initiative, calling for both sides to restart negotiations and comply with the ceasefire.[95] United States On 11 April 2012, the US State Department condemned South Sudan's seizure of Heglig and in statement said "We condemn South Sudan's military involvement in the attack on and seizure of Heglig, an act which goes beyond self-defense and has increased tensions between Sudan and South Sudan to dangerous levels."[46] Later on, however, the US took a different tone, condemning Khartoum's bombardment of South Sudanese territory and "military incursion into South Sudan". To South Sudan, the US release recognized the "right of South Sudan to self-defense", but urged "restraint in its reaction to Sudan's attack in Unity State". The US welcomed the South Sudanese withdrawal from Heglig and called for all South Sudanese troops to be withdrawn from areas across the 1 January 1956 border. In his message to the Sudanese and South Sudanese people, President Obama reiterated that "All those who are fighting must recognize that there is no military solution." Viet Nam On 22 September 2012, Vietnamese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Luong Thanh Nghi calls for "concerned parties to abide by the international law and signed agreements, to restrain themselves and keep tensions from escalating while working on resolving disagreements by peaceful negotiations," Yemen On 21 April 2012, Yemen condemned South Sudan's occupation of Heglig, called for both parties to give diplomatic efforts a chance, and argued both sides should "establish ties enhancing the mutual confidence and building on the bonds of common history and human relations between the two countries."

Sudan internal conflict (2011–present)

The Sudan internal conflict is an ongoing conflict in the early 2010s between the Army of Sudan and the
Sudan Revolutionary Front, particularly the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), a northern affiliate of the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement in South Sudan. The conflict started as a dispute over the oil-rich region of Abyei in the months leading up to South Sudanese independence, though it is also related to the nominally resolved war in Darfur. This problem were deeply discussed by Bogumil Terminski from the University of Geneva (*Oil-induced displacement and resettlement. Social problem and human rights issue*, 2012). According to this author the conflict is estimated to affect a total of 1.4 million people, and to have displaced over 200,000 people. In early September 2011, Sudanese forces clashed with the SPLM-N in Blue Nile state, seizing control of the state capital of Ad-Damazin and ousting Governor Malik Agar, the leader of the SPLM-N's Blue Nile branch. Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) militants allied with the SPLM-N marched into the state of North Kordofan in December 2011, sparking confrontations with the Sudanese military that led to the death of the JEM's leader, Khalil Ibrahim. The spread of the conflict has sparked concerns that the fighting could lead to a third Sudanese civil war.

Background

Although South Kordofan is north of the international border separating Sudan and South Sudan, many of its residents (particularly in the Nuba Mountains) identify with the South. Many residents fought on the side of southern rebels during the long civil war. South Kordofan was not allowed to participate in the January 2011 referendum to create South Sudan, and the "popular consultation" process they were promised also failed to take place. Tensions rose around the status of the Abyei Area, an oil-rich region that was statutorily part of both South Kordofan and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states, in May 2011 ahead of South Sudan’s scheduled independence. As South Kordofan was slated to remain with the North while Northern Bahr el Ghazal was seceding together with the rest of what was then Southern Sudan, the status of Abyei was unclear, and both Khartoum and Juba claimed the area as their own. The conflict is widely viewed as connected to the 2012 South Sudan–Sudan border conflict.

Conflict

On 19 May 2011, militants reportedly affiliated with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army attacked a convoy of mixed Sudanese Army and UNMIS vehicles 10 km north of Abyei town as they withdrew from the area’s administrative centre, drawing sharp condemnation from both the Sudanese government and the United Nations. At least 15 Sudanese tanks entered Abyei town on 20 May, beginning large-scale fighting in Abyei. By 22 May, the Sudanese military had seized control of the town, and most of Abyei’s residents had fled south toward Bahr el Ghazal. Both the Sudanese government and the government of Southern Sudan accused one another of violating the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.[9] On 6 June 2011, armed conflict broke out between the forces of Northern and Southern Sudan in broader South Kordofan
state, ahead of the scheduled independence of the South on 9 July. The Northern army said that SPLA launched an attack on a police station and stole weapons prompting a response. The SPLA claimed that the Northern army attempted to disarm their units by force. On 14 June, the UN accused the Sudanese government of carrying out an "intensive bombing campaign" near the north-south border which has led to "huge suffering" for civilians in South Kordofan. Some 140,000 people have fled the fighting. Aid agency offices have been looted, churches have been ransacked and buildings destroyed. Aid workers say that ethnic Nubans are being targeted by the northern military and Arab militias. This was denied by Rabbie Abdelattif Ebaid, an adviser to Sudan's information minister, who said that only rebel fighters were being targeted.[6] On 15 June, US President Barack Obama called for a ceasefire urging both the North and South to "live up to their responsibilities" to prevent a return to civil war. The head of the worldwide Anglican church, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said: "The humanitarian challenge is already great, and the risk of another Darfur situation, with civilian populations at the mercy of government-supported terror, is a real one".

On 19 June, Sudanese president Omer Hassan al-Bashir accused the Sudan People's Liberation Govement (northern sector) (SPLM-N) of "betrayal" in South Kordofan. "If they want war...we will show them practically like what happened in Abyei and South Kordofan" Bashir said. "It is better that they [SPLM-N] come to us in good terms and we will be better than them," he added. The Northern Army said that it would continue its military campaign in South Kordofan, which included aerial bombardment, until it crushes the rebellion led by former deputy governor and leading SPLM-N figure Abdelaziz al-Hilu. Fighting intensified around the state capital of Kadugli. Fighting continued after South Sudan gained independence on 9 July, though the Sudanese government insisted that order had been restored in South Kordofan proper. A UN report leaked on 18 July documented alleged war crimes in South Kordofan, blaming both sides but reserving many of its heaviest accusations for the Sudanese government. The following day, UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos called for an independent investigation into atrocities possibly committed during the conflict. Amos said the government of Sudan should lift its restrictions on access to the region. The alleged human rights abuses include "forced disappearances, targeting of UN staff and summary executions." Blue Nile Governor Malik Agar, the leader of the SPLM-N, warned that a wider war could develop unless the conflict ends quickly. Agar claimed that rebel groups across Sudan could join forces and march on Khartoum. His argument appeared to be bolstered by the declaration of the Justice and Equality Movement, the largest rebel group in Darfur, that it had joined forces with the SPLM-N in South Kordofan for the first time on 19 July. A JEM spokesman said 150 Sudanese soldiers were killed while three JEM fighters had been captured. The Sudanese government claimed it had no evidence of JEM participation in the conflict and that the situation in South Kordofan was calm.[15] However, a JEM leader among the militants captured was later sentenced to death by hanging, state-run media reported on 27 August. Around the same time, the Sudan Tribune reported that the SPLM-N, the JEM, and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) had formed a tentative alliance to resist the federal
government in Khartoum. September–December 2011 On 1 September, SPLM-N rebels in South Kordofan claimed the military was deliberately destroying crops and farms belonging to the Nuba people in an attempt to starve the state into submission. Meanwhile, state-run media claimed SPLM-N guerrillas killed 17 civilians, including children, and wounded 14 in the Kalugi region of South Kordofan the same day.[19] A spokesman for the Sudanese military said that SPLM-N militants attacked army positions in Ad-Damazin, the capital of Blue Nile state, late on 1 September. Governor Malik Agar disputed this account, saying the army attacked Blue Nile state institutions first, including his official residence. The military quickly took control of Ad-Damazin, and Khartoum sacked Agar and replaced him with a military governor. Agar and his allies regrouped in southern Blue Nile. On 2 September, the federal government declared a state of emergency in the state. The Sudanese Air Force reportedly carried out strike missions, bombing SPLM-N villages and towns. The SPLM-N claimed four civilians were killed in an aerial bombing of Kormok. The SPLM-N’s Darfuri allies, the JEM and the SLM, issued a joint statement on 4 September condemning the Sudanese military’s use of force against the SPLM-N in Blue Nile, calling it a plot to spread "chaos and killing" across the country. They also called on the United Nations Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Blue Nile, Darfur, and South Kordofan. Helicopters, Antonov An-26s, MiG-29s and other aircraft at El Obeid Airbase where the SAF are believed to be attacking from. The Sudanese military claimed on 10 September to have broken an SPLM-N "siege" of Qiessan, near the Ethiopian border, and evacuated its wounded from the town, though it was unclear whether they took control of Qiessan outright or just escaped from the area. Both Agar and Yahia Mohamed Kheir, the military governor appointed by Bashir, claimed control of 80 percent of Blue Nile state. Meanwhile, the Sudanese government said 5,000 people had fled their homes in Blue Nile as a result of the fighting, and Information Minister Sana Hamad al-Awad claimed it had proof the South Sudanese government was paying the salaries of SPLM-N fighters across the border. The Sudanese military seized control of Kurmuk, the former stronghold of the SPLM-N in Blue Nile state, on 2 November. President Omar al-Bashir visited the town four days later to declare it "liberated". He also threatened South Sudan with war, accusing it of supporting the SPLM-N in its anti-government activities. On 10 November, it was reported that the Sudanese government bombed Yida camp in South Sudan’s Unity state soon after 12:00 GMT the same day. Two Antonov makeshift bombers were seen leaving the area. They were said to have dropped five bombs, four detonating. The local official Miabek Lang said at least 12 people had been killed and 20 wounded during the strike. The Sudanese government has denied the claims. Darfuri factions and the SPLM-N in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states announced the formation of an alliance called the Sudanese Revolutionary Front on 12 November. The stated goal of the coalition is to overthrow the Bashir government and install a democratic system in Sudan.[28] SPLM-N fighters in South Kordofan reported turning back Sudanese army elements attempting to dislodge them from positions in Warni on 10 December, as well as the capture of the localities of Abu al-Hassan and al-Rashad three days earlier. The battles left 19 dead, a spokesman for the rebel group claimed. By 12 December, fighting had shifted to Taru je, near the international border with South Sudan. In a related skirmish, South Sudanese and Sudanese
regular divisions clashed at Jau, a disputed town on the border, in what a Sudanese army spokesman described as a victory for Khartoum's soldiers. On 21 and 22 December, students began protesting at the University of Khartoum and the Red Sea University in a flare-up of anti-government protests that began in January. A number of Darfuri students at the Red Sea University threatened to leave in protest after several student leaders were arrested late on 21 December, and by 25 December, they had declared their allegiance to the Sudan Revolutionary Front and were calling for the overthrow of the Sudanese government. Several students at the University of Khartoum, including at least one Darfuri student association head, were taken into custody by security troops on 22 December after a multiethnic protest against the Merowe Dam in solidarity with the Manasir facing displacement as a result of its construction. The students in Khartoum also began agitating for the government's ouster on 24 December, following the clashes and arrests on campus two days earlier. On 25 December, Justice and Equality Movement leader Khalil Ibrahim was intercepted and killed along with 30 of his fighters in North Kordofan, west of Wad Banda. Sudanese state media reported Ibrahim was defeated in fighting with the army. JEM confirmed Ibrahim's death, but said he had been killed by an airstrike, not in combat with Sudanese ground troops. Ibrahim's death came one day after JEM fighters struck three villages in the state. By early January, reports of malnutrition and hunger increased in the conflict-afflicted zones. According to the United Nations, close to 417,000 people had been displaced, including 80,000 who fled to South Sudan. On February 26, rebels from the recently-formed Sudan Revolutionary Front claimed to have killed up to 130 Sudanese soldiers in an attack on a Sudanese army garrison around Lake Obyad, near the border with South Sudan. Main article: 2012 South Sudan–Sudan border conflict South Sudan accused the north of bombing two Southern oil wells using its air force on 1 March, destroying both structures, allegations the north denied. The incident raised fears that war could break out between the two countries. On 26 March, the Sudanese air force bombed areas of Unity state in South Sudan, and sent army and militia forces across the border. South Sudanese forces counter-attacked and seized control of the Heglig oil fields as South Sudan's President Salva Kiir warned of war. On March 30, more fighting was reported in the border area between the Sudanese Army and rebels. April 2012
On 12 and 13 April, the rebels claimed to had killed 79 government troops and captured another nine in two ambushes in the mountainous terrain, about 35 kilometres south of the Blue Nile state capital of Ed Damazin. For their part they stated three of their fighters were killed and seven wounded in the fighting. The government had no comment on the claim. The previous week the rebels also stated that they killed 13 soldiers for the loss of one rebel in an ambush 20 kilometres (12 miles) south of Ed Damazin. The government denied those losses.
On 15 April, government troops took control of Mugum, a stronghold of the pro-southern rebels, in the Blue Nile state, near South Sudan’s border. The government news service claimed, per an "informed" military source, that 25 rebels were killed. July 2012
On 3 July, 25 soldiers were killed in battle with rebels. On 6 July, a state official of Sudan was killed among 7 others in an attack on a government convoy. Ibrahim Balandiya, South Kordofan’s parliament speaker, was attacked between two villages in the region. He is the most senior official to be killed during the whole conflict, according to state news agencies. Sudan blamed SPLM-N for the attack which also killed another state official. The other official was Faisal Bashir, the head of South Kordofan’s strategic planning committee, according to SUNA. On 24 July, Sudan army says that they killed 50 JEM rebels and destroyed several vehicles, but this was denied by the rebels On 23 July, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) clashed with government forces and militia in Kirkdy, South Kordofan and in Alhtbaun, North Kordofan. Rebels say that they killed or wounded dozens of government troops since the clashes started and they took control of two tanks and 20 vehicles.

August–September 2012

On 25 August, Sudanese army claim to have killed 12 rebels and wounded dozens in the south of the country. The next day rebels claim that also 61 SAF soldiers were killed. On 6 September, Sudanese army claim to have killed 77 rebels in two clashes in South Kordofan. The same day 61 Sudanese soldiers and 32 rebels were killed in Fanga area, East Jebel Marra. Also 45 corpses of government forces and militias and many burnt-out cars were found.[49] On clashes erupted in 7 September government forces were able to evacuate 85 bodies and 25 injured soldiers in large trucks also 32 rebels. On 20 September, rebels announced that 81 Sudanese soldiers were killed in clashes in Kolghe, East Jebel Marra, North Darfur. Adam Saleh Abkar, said they killed dozens of SAF soldiers and pro-government militias on Tuesday morning. He explained the government forces fighting on the ground were backed by the Sudanese air force. Adam Saleh Abkar, spokesman of SLM-Minnawi announced that joint rebel troops killed and injured dozens Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) soldiers and pro-government militia troops. The clashes took place between Tabit and Shangil Tobai, East Jebel Marra, North Darfur, on Thursday, 27 September. On 30 September, rebels announced that 70 rebels and 12 government soldiers were killed in recent clashes between Tabit and Shangil Tobai, in East Jebel Marra, North Darfur. Also 84 government troops were killed and several got injured in other battle.

October 2012

On 1 October, rebels announced the killing of 22 Sudanese government troops who were in a convoy traveling from Ribeige locality in North Kordofan to Al-Ayd Jaranebi locality, in North Darfur. On 9 October, A gunman was killed during clashes between pro-government militias at Mawashi market in Kabkabiya, North Darfur. On 11 October an armed group killed a policeman and injured four others in Nyala, South Darfur, two militants also got killed and another two were arrested. On 14 October, rebels killed 21 government troops and seven pro-government militia elements in a battle against government forces in South Kordofan.[58] On 15 October, rebels announced liberating the area of Surkum in Blue Nile state after a battle against government troops, which lasted four days, on Sunday afternoon October 14, Radio Dabanga has learned. Arnu Ngutolo Lodi, SPLA-N military spokesman, told Radio Dabanga that SRF troops
managed to clear the area of Surkum and that the government troops suffered heavy losses during the battles. The governor of South Kordofan, Ahmed Haroun, said that rebel forces attacked the village of Umm Dehelib, in Kalogi locality on Sunday morning. Haroun explained that government forces responded to the rebel attack and killed 12 rebel elements, injured another dozen and captured one. He added that four citizens were killed during the battle. On the same day government and JEM clash in South Kordofan, dozens of government soldiers were killed including the force commander. The rebels destroyed three army vehicles and seized two another two that were carrying large quantities ammunition and weapons. On 22 October, SPLM-N rebels killed 6 government soldiers. On 18 October, rebels killed dozens of pro-government militiamen in the area of Abu Delek southeast of El-Fasher. On 31 October, SPLM-N rebels killed 30 Sudanese soldiers.

November 2012

On 7 November, clashes between JEM and SAF, left 3 rebels and between 144 and 157 government soldiers in North Kordofan. SPLM-N Rebels killed 70 soldiers in 3 November, also 7 rebels were killed.

Human rights

Sometime during March an undated video emerged of the Governor of South Kordofan Ahmed Haroun telling Sudanese soldiers: "You must hand over the place clean. Rub it, crush it and sweep it. Don’t bring them [Rebels] back alive. We have no space for them". An army commander standing near Haroun then says: "Don’t bring them back, eat them alive" amid laughter by the group in the video. Haroun follows with "Don’t create an administrative burden for us [by bringing back prisoners alive]".

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay warned that the comments by the Governor could amount to "violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states". She followed with "Such comments are extremely worrying in this context and could amount to incitement.".

The Sudanese Government has since claimed that Mr. Haroun, who has already been indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his alleged role in the previous conflict in Darfur, was simply trying to boost the soldiers’ morale. Mr Haron however, has called the video a fabrication, accusing al-Jazeera of editing the video to distort what he had said and vowed to sue the news channel.

Ms. Pillay said that witnesses who have visited the Nuba mountain region, mainly inhabited by the Nuba people and located in Southern Kordofan, have been reporting the burning of villages and killing of civilians in "an apparent scorched-earth policy." "We know very little about the scale of the military operation in Southern Kordofan, as we have been denied access to the area," she said. "But as far back as August last year, we found that human rights violations that could amount to crimes against humanity or war crimes have taken place in Southern Kordofan.".

Emigration
Following what Yasir Arman, leader of SPLA-N and the UN have described as a "scorched earth policy" more than 105,000 Sudanese refugees from the states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile have sought refuge South Sudan. Another 30,000 refugees fled Blue Nile into nearby Ethiopia.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners started providing basic assistance to more than 16,000 refugees who settled in Yida, South Sudan, after fleeing violence in the Nuba Mountains region, located in Sudan's Southern Kordofan state. Another 2,300 refugees have so far moved southwards to safer sites in Nyeel and Pariang to another UNHCR camps. Meanwhile, in South Sudan's Upper Nile state, where an influx of refugees from Sudan's Blue Nile state is continuing, relocation from border zones has been ongoing. About 86,000 Sudanese refugees fleeing attacks in Blue Nile state have relocated to the safety of formal sites in Doro and Jammam, Ms. Fleming said.

However since the beginning of Sudanese border conflict in 2012 the UNHCR now considers the Yida refugee settlement as not safe for long-term stay due to its proximity to the volatile border zone. South Sudan authorities at central and local level are also urging refugee leaders to relocate, in line with the provisions of the 1969 OAU (now AU) Convention on Refugees. Article 2 stipulates that "for reasons of security, countries of asylum shall, as far as possible, settle refugees at a reasonable distance from the frontier of their country of origin."

Attempts at resolution
Abyei agreement

In June 2011, an African Union panel headed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki tried to de-escalate the situation through North-South talks in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. On 20 June, the parties agreed to demilitarize the contested area of Abyei where Ethiopian peacekeepers will be deployed. The agreement details the mechanism by which the Abyei administration council to replace the one dissolved by president Omer Hassan al-Bashir in May 2011. Its chief shall be picked by the SPLM but must be approved by the Northern National Congress Party (NCP). The deputy however, would be nominated by the NCP and endorsed by SPLM. Three of the five heads of the departments of the administrative council would be nominated by the SPLM and the remaining two by the NCP. A police service would be established for the region, with the size and composition determined by a joint committee co-chaired by northern and southern officials. The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon welcomed the accord but said the real test would be how both sides would implement the deal.

On 21 June, a statement was attributed to the NCP’s official in charge of Abyei file, Didiri Mohamed Ahmed, as saying that there was an understanding reached at the Addis Ababa meeting between the two parties that South Sudan would concede future ownership of Abyei to the North. However, the spokesman of SPLA, Philip Aguer, told the press that the statement from the NCP senior official was incorrect.

August ceasefire

On 23 August, President Omar al-Bashir announced a two-week unilateral ceasefire in the conflict while on a surprise visit to South Kordofan state. He said the government would continue to embargo foreign aid
directed toward South Kordofan, and the only humanitarian access would be through the Sudanese Red Crescent. He said that after the two-week ceasefire, "the situation will be assessed on the ground".

International reactions

Supranational organisations

African Union – On 29 June, AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping called on both sides in South Kordofan "to immediately cease hostilities, to allow the access of humanitarian aid and the return of displaced people" and hailed a ceasefire agreement as "decisive" and "a good omen". The AU, led first by former South African President Thabo Mbeki and then by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, attempted to mediate a solution to growing tensions in Blue Nile, but it failed to prevent the spread of the conflict.

United Nations – The United Nations Security Council voted on 3 June to demand that Sudan and Southern Sudan withdraw troops from the Abyei Area. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced support for efforts to end the conflict in late June 2011, saying on 29 June that Sudan and the SPLM-N must work quickly for a cessation of hostilities. A United Nations Mission in the Sudan human rights investigation in June and early July, prior to the mission's disbandment, found that "condemnation is insufficient" for the atrocities it said had been committed by the Sudanese military during the fighting, including attacks on UNMIS offices and personnel, though it also criticised the SPLM for violations. In August, the United States attempted to persuade the Security Council to pass a resolution condemning the violence, but it was blocked by Sudanese allies Russia and China. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres responded to the outbreak of violence in Blue Nile in September by saying both sides must work to prevent "yet one more refugee crisis" in the region. Ban also expressed concern over the violence.

Countries

South Sudan – On 22 May, South Sudan denounced the seizure of Abyei as an "act of war". Information Minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin denied claims by the Sudanese government that Juba was offering material support to SPLM-N fighters in the North on 31 August and asserted that the SPLM had severed all ties with the SPLM-N after independence. He expressed concern at the violence in Blue Nile on 2 September and called on the Sudanese government to launch a full investigation and endeavour to prevent the violence from spreading.

United States – Having condemned the military takeover of Abyei on 21 March, on 22 July, Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice accused the Sudanese military of perpetrating human rights violations in South Kordofan.[90] Princeton Lyman, the US special envoy to Sudan, said on 10 August that Washington was concerned that fighting could spread to and involve newly independent South Sudan.

France – On 22 May 2011, France condemned the military takeover and demanded a Sudanese withdrawal from Abyei. France argued that Sudan’s actions constituted a violation of 2005 peace agreement and of the Kadugli Accord signed in January, and that the conflict should be mediated by the African Union.

Canada – On 23 May 2011, the Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, John Baird, condemned the "recent upsurge of violence in Abyei". Canada called for an immediate withdrawal by both sides, respect for human
rights and avoidance of further escalation. Baird added that he hoped "Northern and Southern Sudan" would both "embrace the opportunity afforded by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel to resolve the status of Abyei and other outstanding issues".

United Kingdom- On 22 May 2011, Foreign Secretary William Hague condemned the violence, saying that the actions were "clear violations of the CPA and cannot be justified" and calling for "all sides to cease hostilities immediately. All unauthorised forces should be withdrawn from the entire area of Abyei in accordance with past agreements by the parties."

NGOs
Groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have expressed concern about the humanitarian situation.

In May 2012, researchers at the Overseas Development Institute highlighted that the situation in South Kordofan was approaching crisis levels and called for stronger leadership and engagement from humanitarian actors, as well as a redoubling of diplomatic efforts to restart political dialogue in the hope of securing a lasting and peaceful resolution.

The 2011–2012 Sudanese protests began in January 2011 as part of the Arab Spring regional protest movement. Unlike other Arab countries, popular uprisings in Sudan succeeded in toppling the government prior to the Arab Spring, in both 1964 and 1985. Anti-government demonstrations were less common throughout the summer of 2011, during which South Sudan seceded from Sudan, but resumed in force late in the year, and in June 2012 shortly after the government passed its much criticized austerity plan.

Background

Omar al-Bashir has been in power since he led a bloodless coup in 1989

President Omar al-Bashir has been the Sudanese president since he led a bloodless coup in 1989. Bashir began instituting Sharia and abolished political parties in 1990. He appointed himself president in 1993, returned Sudan to civilian rule, and won a presidential election in 1996 as the only candidate.[6] In 2008, the International Criminal Court called for his arrest for alleged genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur. But Sudan rejected the indictment, saying the decision was defiance against Sudan's sovereignty. The political system of Sudan are widely considered by both domestic and international community to take place within an authoritarian system due to the control of the National Congress Party of the judiciary, executive and legislative branches of government.

Demographic and economic challenges

Austerity plan

Sudan has lost billions of dollars in oil receipts since South Sudan gained independence in July 2011, about
three quarters of Sudan's oil fields falling within the territory of the new country. The north has been left struggling for revenue, plagued by inflation, and with a severe shortage of dollars to pay for imports. The landlocked South depended on the north's pipeline and port to export its crude, but Khartoum and Juba could not agree on how much South Sudan should pay to use the infrastructure. Sudan's already depleted oil revenues shrank by a further 20 per cent after its main Heglig oil field was damaged and shut down in fighting with invading South Sudanese troops in April 2012.

In an attempt to address the economic meltdown, the Sudanese government has announced a new austerity plan on 18 June 2012, which includes raising taxes on consumer goods, cutting the number of civil servants on its payroll, raising the price of a gallon of petrol by 5 Sudanese pounds, pushing it up to 13.5 pounds from 8.5 pounds, and lifting the fuel subsidies. The plan did not gain much acceptance among common Sudanese as it is believed that the prices of every commodity will get hikes in effect from transport to domestically produced food and other goods.

Lead-up to the protests

Arab Spring

The protests in Sudan have been influenced by the revolutionary wave that started in Tunisia and later spread to other Middle Eastern and North African nations. The protests followed shortly after a successful independence referendum in January 2011, on whether South Sudan should secede from Sudan and become an independent nation.

Self-immolation

Following the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia on 17 December 2010, Al-Amin Moussa Al-Amin set himself ablaze on 23 January 2011 in Omdurman.

Protests

Timeline

Early 2011

On January 30, 2011, protests took place in Khartoum and Al-Ubayyid (el-Obeid).[11] In Khartoum, police clashed with demonstrators in the town centre and at least two universities. Demonstrators had organized on online social networking sites since the Tunisian protests the month before. Hussein Khogali, editor in chief of the Al-Watan newspaper stated that his daughter had been arrested for organizing the protest via Facebook and opposition leader Mubarak al-Fadil's two sons were arrested while on their way to the main protest. Pro-government newspapers had warned that protests would cause chaos. Some protesters called for President Omar al-Bashir to step down. Activists said that dozens of people had been arrested. The protests came on the same day the preliminary results for the referendum indicated some 99% of South Sudanese voted to secede.[13] One student died in hospital the same night from injuries received in the clashes.[2] Students threw rocks at police officers while chanting "No to high prices, no to corruption" and "Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan together as one." Police officers arrested five and put down the protest.

In the Al-Ubayyid 30 January demonstration, about 500 people protested "against the government and
demanding change" in the market. Police broke up the demonstration using tear gas.

On 1 February 2011, about 200 students demonstrated in front of Al-Neelain University in Khartoum. Police stopped the demonstration.

Further protests, scheduled for March 21 were violently suppressed as they were beginning.

On 1 November, hundreds of protesters took to the streets in the eastern town of Kassala.

Student protests in December 2011

Students protested at the Red Sea University in Port Sudan after the arrest of several Darfuri student leaders on the night of 21 December, with many Darfuri student activists calling for a revolution and declaring their open support for the Sudan Revolutionary Front fighting the government in the south. On 26 December, 42 Darfuri students left the Red Sea University in protest over their treatment, Radio Dabanga reported.

Students also clashed with riot police wielding batons after security forces stormed the University of Khartoum on 22 December to break up a rally by about 700 student demonstrators protesting the displacement of the Manasir community caused by the construction of the Merowe Dam. Twenty were injured and at least four were arrested, activists told media. On 24 December, approximately 16,000 students attempted to launch a sit-in at the university to protest the police, the university administration, and the federal government, but they were dispersed by riot police who deployed tear gas, dealt out beatings, and arrested at least 73. Leaders of the student movement warned that they would continue to organize and demand the overthrow of the government despite security officers' violent tactics. On 30 December, thousands of students successfully launched a sit-in protest, the Associated Press reported.

At Sudan University of Science and Technology in Khartoum, fighting between student supporters of Khalil Ibrahim and the ruling National Congress Party broke out on 28 December, days after the Sudanese government announced Ibrahim's death in a battle between his Darfuri rebel group JEM and the Sudan People's Armed Forces. Twelve were injured in the brawl, which police used tear gas to disperse.

The student protests, in particular those at the University of Khartoum, have been blamed by police on the influence of unnamed Sudanese opposition parties.

Anti-austerity protests in June-July 2012

The former Sudanese independence flag has been used by some protestors as an opposition flag, along with the current flag

Hundreds of female students in the University of Khartoum protested peacefully in the surroundings of their hostels at the central campus on the evening of 16 June. The protesters voice opposition against the escalation of prices and economic hardship in Sudan. The next day, students took to the streets, denouncing the austerity measures one day ahead of plans announced by the Sudanese government.

As Omar Al-Bashir has formally announced a series of deep budget cuts while addressing the National Assembly in Khartoum, about 250 students held anti-austerity protest in the Khartoum University. Riot
police used tear gas and batons against the protesters who in turn threw stones at police.[31] The clashes took place in front of the main campus of the University of Khartoum and in the suburb Omdurman against more than 300 student protesters.[31]. On 20 June, hundreds of students held anti-austerity protest for another day,[32] escalating their demands and started to chant slogans like "No, no to high prices" and "The people want to overthrow the regime".[32]

Shortly after the Friday prayers on 22 June, hundreds of Sudanese assembled to protest.[33] Unlike the previous protest held during the past few days, this protest was not mainly a student led one due to the protest spreading into many neighborhoods that had been quiet.[33] Protests took place in Omdurman, Khartoum, Burri, Al-Daim, El Obeid, Sennar, and Bahri saw demonstrations after noon prayers.[33][34] The police escalated the use of force during their clashes with the protesters and the smell of tear gas and broken rocks covered streets.[33] Men in civilian clothes also attacked the demonstrators.[35] Students in Kassala protested on 27 June outside the local university against the austerity measures and called for regime change.[36]

On 29 June, around 2,000 protesters gathered in the capital and chanted "the people want the regime to fall". Hundreds of police and security forces attacked the demonstration with tear gas. Other protests in the area of north Kordofan were reported.[37] Activists said that a man named Amir Bayoumi, from Omdurman, has reportedly died from the effects of inhaling tear gas.[3] The largest protest so far erupted in Sudan on 6 July in which between 3,000 and 4,000 people protested at Al Ansar mosque in Wad Nubawi, Omdurman. Security forces and police blocked the roads leading to the Al Ansar mosque and surrounded the courtyard before the end of Friday prayers.

Sudanese university students armed with sticks and stones on Wednesday staged one of their largest protest on 11 July since unrest sparked by inflation began nearly a month ago. Security forces fired tear gas while students at the University of Khartoum were shouting and throwing stones after the protest began mid-afternoon.[38] Two days later, Sudanese police surrounded the Imam Abdel Rahman Mosque in Omdurman and fired teargas when some 300 worshippers started a protest after noon prayers. Officers used batons to drive worshippers back inside the mosque where they continued their protest for more than an hour, one witness said. Protesters shouted "the people want to overthrow the regime" and held up banners denouncing the government.[39] On 16 July, a group of over 300 Sudanese lawyers protested outside Khartoum's main courtroom on Monday against the government’s use of violence and arbitrary detention during last Friday’s peaceful demonstrations.[40]

Witnesses said in what was the biggest anti-austerity protest on 31 July since President Omar Hassan al-Bashir announced a cut in fuel subsidies and other austerity measures, more than 1,000 protesters, mostly students, threw rocks at police, burned tires and blocked roads in the market area of Nyala, on Tuesday.[41] Activists said police forces fired heavy teargas and live bullets, leading to the death of 12 protesters and injury of more than 50 and added that 9 of the victims' bodies have been received at Nyala Hospital. However, the authorities issued conflicting statements with the police, saying eight were killed and South
Protests over killing of Darfuri students in December 2012

Arrests and repression

On 17 January 2011, security forces in Sudan arrested the head of the Popular Congress Party, Hassan al-Turabi, as well as five other members of the party, after he called for a similar protest to oust the ruling government over electoral fraud, stoking inflation and abrogating civil liberties at a time when Sudan was facing a secessionist referendum.

The Committee to Protect Journalists said journalists are facing increasing harassment. On 30 January 2011, journalists were beaten by security forces and at least eight were detained. The following day, the distribution of several opposition newspapers was blocked by authorities.

During the anti-austerity protests in June 2012, the Egyptian journalist Salma El-wardany was detained on 21 June 2012 and later released after five hours in detention. A Sudanese citizen journalist Usamah Mohamad was arrested the following day. An Agence France-Presse reporter was also detained.

As of July 2012, over 2,000 activists have been detained since protests began in Khartoum on 16 June, the activist group Girifna reported. The majority of detainees are being held in NSS detention centres, which are known for the use of ill treatment and torture—including beatings, sleep and food deprivation, racism and sexual abuse. Authorities have reportedly beaten detainees with their fists, hoses, plastic pipes, sticks and metal bars.

Responses

Domestic

On 21 February 2011, President Omar al-Bashir announced that he would not seek to run in the presidential election in 2015.

On 11 July 2012, President Omar al-Bashir dismissed opposition calls for an Arab Spring-style uprising in the African country, threatening that "a burning hot summer" awaits his enemies. Bashir also warned that Sudan's enemies would also be skewered.

International

States

USA – The U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland condemned the assault and detention of anti-austerity protestors, saying a crackdown on protestors will not solve Sudan’s political and economic crises. "There have been reports of protestors being beaten, imprisoned and severely mistreated while in government custody. We call for the immediate release of those detained for peaceful protest."

NGOs

Arabic Network for Human Rights Information slammed the crackdown on protests, says Khartoum "must show respect for the human rights" of its citizens after Khartoum uses violence to disperse peaceful demonstrations: "There should be dialogue with the opposition and respect for the human rights of its citizens to express themselves and protest without harassment."
The Organisation for Defence of Rights and Freedoms said that police in Sudan have attacked demonstrators with tear gas and rubber bullets and accused security forces of surrounding mosques where protests take place.[54]

Human Rights Watch stated that the Sudanese security forces have arrested scores of protesters, opposition members, and journalists, beat people in detention, and used rubber bullets and even live ammunition to break up the anti-austerity protests. It further called on Sudan to end the crackdown on peaceful protesters, release people who have been detained, and allow journalists to report freely on the events.[55]

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the Sudanese authorities to ensure that the demonstration proceeds peacefully, without mass arrests and violent measures by security forces.[56]

Solidarity protests

On 30 June 2012, Sudanese living outside Sudan stage protests in London, Dublin, Washington, D.C., Toronto, Paris, Cairo, New Delhi, Kuala Lumpur, Edinburgh, Sacramento, Canberra and other various locations to show of in solidarity with the ongoing anti-government protests in Sudan.[57]

The South Sudan internal conflict began as part of the Sudanese nomadic conflicts, continuing since January 2011. The fighting continued throughout the transition process for South Sudan's independent government. More than a month following South Sudan's independence and secession from Sudan, the fighting escalated after several cattle raids took place during ongoing clashes between the Murle and Lou Nuer, at farms in South Sudan's Jonglei state, killing up to 600 people[2] and injuring up to 985, on 18 August 2011. [3] The clashes took place when members of the Murle group are said to have attacked the majority Lou Nuer, stealing nearly 40,000 cattle.[4] The death toll was originally reported to be as low as 58,[5] but the United Nations said the flow of information had been hampered by vast distances and poor logistics.[6] The UN also said that there was a possibility that as many as 200 people had been abducted.[6] By January 2012, clashes including and stemming from the August cattle raid had left more than 1,100 dead in the region, according to the UN.[7]

Fighting further intensified in late December 2011 and early January 2012 as the Nuer White Army, an armed group of Lou Nuer tribesmen, attacked Pibor and surrounding Murle villages in retaliation for the August 2011 cattle raid. The UN estimated between 20,000[8] and 50,000 were displaced as a result of the fighting.[7]

Background

See also: Sudan–SPLM-N conflict (2011)

Violence erupted in Southern Sudan following the Southern Sudanese independence referendum, 2011, which took place between 9 and 15 January. Conflict initially focussed on the volatile Abyei region before spreading to neighbouring areas. By February, armed confrontations between the Southern Sudan People's
Liberation Army (SPLA) and rebel forces loyal to George Athor Deng had escalated, resulting in hundreds of deaths.[9]

Timeline of incidents

"As I mentioned last time that SPLM/A has no capacity for running south Sudan affairs and instead of looking for peace and a full resolution of the conflict, SPLM declared war against our movement, deluding itself that we must be crushed within one month time, that is a big lie.

We will remain challenging the SPLM/A, and teach them a lesson that they will never forget. SPLM/A should learn from their experience when it was in the bush, if guerrillas can be crushed than SPLM/A could have been crushed.

I believe the only way to silence guns is through peace full settlement of the conflict, by addressing the root causes of the conflict and bridging the gap between the two conflicting groups. Because they are not committed and interested in bringing peace to our people, the SPLA forces on Sunday at 6.00am staged two attacks on our two bases in Alow and Patai, resulting in a number of their soldiers being killed. They suffered heavy casualties in terms of human and weapons. 86 died and 147 were wounded and 90 weapons were captured on the SPLA side, referring to the SPLA and 90 different types of weapons were captured. On our side we lost 6 and 17 sustained injuries.

"—Dok James Puok, spokesman for Athor rebels, 28 February 2011[9]

January 2011

7–9 January: Clashes between nomadic Misseriya Arabs and the Dinka people killed 'dozens' in Abyei preceding the referendum. A source of tension was reportedly the delay in holding a separate referendum for the Abyei region. The Dinkas largely supported South Sudan's independence during the Second Sudanese Civil War.[10]

9–15 January: The independence referendum is held for Southern Sudan.

February 2011

4–5 January: In Malakal, elements and factions of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) of northern Sudan and the SPLA clashed, following the SAF's refusal to hand over heavy weapons. The fighting spread elsewhere in Upper Nile State, killing more than 60 on the SAF side.[10]

7 February: The results of the referendum are announced by the government in Khartoum. Nearly 99% of voters chose independence, effectively separating from northern Sudan.

9 February: A southern Sudan government minister is shot dead in Juba.[10]

9–10 February: A clash between the SPLA and Athor’s rebels killed 211 people in Fangak County,[9] Jonglei State. The number of dead is initially reported at 105, but rise significantly when bodies were discovered in the town of Phom el-Zeraf, where civilians were shot by Athor's forces as they fled into a river.[10] Spokespersons on both sides accused the other group of instigating the violence. The majority of casualties
were reportedly civilians and elderly Sudanese.

14 February: At a market in Abyei, three people are killed and 300 seek refuge in a United Nations (UNMIS) mission compound.[10]

25 February: Pre-independence Government of Southern Sudan’s President Salva Kiir Mayardit issued an order prompting the SPLA to protect civilians against attacks by rebel groups.

27 February: In Todach, Abyei, ten people died when armed militias stormed a police post. Southern Sudan officials reported some of the attackers were Misseriya, but claimed the attack itself was connected to a Khartoum government-sponsored militia. Another clash in Jonglei between Athor’s forces and the SPLA killed more than 92 people, injuring 164.[9] According to Athor’s rebels, 110 people were killed, including 12 civilians. The SPLA estimated close to 40 casualties.[10]

March 2011

2 March: Another militia attack in an Abyei town kills 30 people, as militia burn hundreds of dwellings.[10]

3–4 March: Close to 25,000 people flee the town in Abyei, migrating south.[10] Farther east, an armed clash in Twic East County, Jonglei between members of the Ayual and Dachuek Dinka, kills 22 people, including one SPLA officer.[11] The United Nations sends in 100 peacekeepers.[12]

6–7 March: North of Malakal, a clash erupts between Captain Olonyi, a rebel loyal to Athor, and the SPLA. 60 people are killed in the fighting.[10] Two separate clashes occur near the village of Owuac/Owachi in Upper Nile State, predominantly inhabited by Shilluk. Phillip Panyang Aguer, the SPLA spokesman, identified a rebel leader called Johnson Oliny/Olony, claiming he attacked a convoy of SPLA soldiers, killing one, while the second retaliatory clash killed 47 rebels, 7 SPLA members, and 8 other militia members. He also reported deadly pre-emptive attacks on Athor rebels in response to the February Fangak clashes, seizing 500 Kalashnikov rifles, and also capturing Athor’s rebel headquarters. Dok James Puok meanwhile claimed that 169 SPLA soldiers were killed, including 105 in the first and 64 in the second attack, along with 34 rebels and "168 innocent civilians",[13] burning down at least six villages. Human Rights Watch later confirmed that over 60 ethnic Shilluk were killed, and more than 7,000 displaced. The official United Nations report counted 62 dead, 70 injured and 7,625 displaced, but how many people were actually killed is unknown.[14]

8 March: In Jonglei, SPLA forces dislodge Athor’s rebels from a hideout, and southern officials declare it a no-go zone.[10]

12 March: Olonyi’s rebels conduct an early-morning raid in Malakal,[15] killing 45.[14] The SPLA repelled the attack, but the operation forcing out further rebels results in more casualties. Over 100 orphaned children are temporarily held hostage, and later released.[10] In following weeks, some Shilluk were detained after being suspected of connections to Olonyi or Lam Akol, who founded the Democratic Change branch of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement in 2009.

12–13 March: A weekend clash between pastoralists of Lakes State and farmers from Western Equatoria left 7 people dead and 5 injured. This happened following a similar clash over pasture that killed 10 people the
13 March: The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLA movement) ceases talks with northern Sudan's National Congress, accusing it of plotting to overthrow the southern government.[10]

17–18 March: The SPLA clashes with a militia in Unity state, and 30 people are killed according to the SPLA. [10] The fighting breaks out in Unity and Upper Nile, before spreading to Jonglei. In all, Aguer reported 34 SPLA soldiers and 36 rebels were killed.[17]

30 March: The armed forces of northern and southern Sudan both deploy heavy weapons to the Abyei region.[12]

In the following months, more defections occurred in the SPLA.

April 2011

"We understand that on the side of (Tang’s forces) 55 were killed including five of his generals ... We don’t have reports of those killed from the SPLA and civilian sides but the (overall) death toll must be much higher "

—Peter Lam Both, Upper Nile State Information Minister, interview with Reuters on April 24, 2011[18]

11 April: The South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA), led by Peter Gadet, announces its formation as a rebel army fighting against the main SPLA forces.[19]

Mid-April: An official United Nations report shows that more than 800 people were killed in nine of ten Southern Sudan states, and about 100,000 displaced.[20]

19–25 April: SPLA spokesman Malaak Ayuen reported that 26 soldiers and at least 70 rebels were killed, totalling 101 in one offensive in Unity State.[20] Clashes between the SPLA and rebels of Peter Gadet claim 45 lives.[18]

22 April: A north Sudanese UN World Food Programme employee is killed by “unknown assailants”.[18]

23 April: In Jonglei, SPLA fighters clash with renegade commander Gabriel Tang’s militia, resulting in 57 rebels and 7 SPLA members being killed according to Ayuen. Tang is captured and surrenders along with 1,300 men.[20]

26 April: The UN World Food Programme announces it has stopped operating in Jonglei and Lakes states following continued conflict, following the killing of an employee. This cuts off food rations to approximately 235,000 civilians.[19]

28 April: Sudan’s president, Omar al-Bashir, issues a statement saying he will not accept South Sudan’s independence as voted in the January referendum unless the north takes control over the oil-rich Abyei region. A draft proposal from the south claims Abyei.[12]

May 2011

1–3 May: Fighting in Abyei between northern and southern Sudan forces kills 14 people. Both sides blame the other for instigating the conflict.[21]

8–9 May: SSLA clash with tribal cattle herders in Warrap State, south of Abyei. The clashes came as SPLA
troops pursued the rebels out of neighbouring Unity State. In Unity State, the information minister described the SPLA's attack on the SSLA as a "cleanup operation". Southern authorities accuse the rebels of being backed by al-Bashir's Khartoum government, and say that the rebels are mobilizing the Misseriya against the SPLA in Unity State. The UN reports more than 1,000 casualties in southern Sudan, and some 93,783 displaced.[19]

20 May: According to SPLA's Philip Aguer, northern Sudan began bombing raids using artillery and tanks, attacking four villages in the disputed region of Abyei. Northern Sudan claims the southern army (SPLA) attacked northern troops travelling in a UN convoy.

21–22 May: Northern Sudan's tanks enter the town in Abyei, in an attempt to clear out southern forces. The United Nations convoy condemns this move, and further condemnation is received from the United States and the UK.[12]

30–31 May: A tentative agreement is reached, establishing a preliminary 20-kilometre ceasefire line and demilitarized region in Abyei. The deal is disclosed by the African Union.

Shortage of food among rebel forces and local tribes during the conflict leads to the outbreak of cattle raids.

June 2011

By June, at least seven "rebel militias" were still fighting with the SPLA forces. Tribal conflict in the form of cattle raids, which stemmed partly from inability to pay dowry fees in the form of cows, escalated.

17 June: The UN reports that 113,000 people had been displaced in the Abyei region, on the disputed border zone, within the past month. The figure later rises past 146,000.

29 June: Another United Nations report estimates 1,400 people were killed in southern Sudan since the beginning of 2011.

July 2011

9 July: South Sudan officially becomes independent from Sudan.

August – December 2011

The 18 August 2011 attack occurred in Uror County, northern Jonglei state, and killed at least 640 people. [27] The attack was reportedly launched by Murle tribesmen after armed groups infiltrated into the Peiri and Pulchuol Districts (Payams) at about 5 a.m. The attack is believed to have been a revenge operation against the Lou Nuer tribe after an attack on the Murle the previous June in Pibor County, prior to South Sudan's independence, in which many deaths were reported and cattle stolen. The attackers burned down over 3,400 houses and the hospital ran by Médecins Sans Frontières. An initial estimate showed that 38,000 heads of cattle were stolen and 208 children were kidnapped.

As fighting expanded into Upper Nile state, leaving 60 dead and 43 injured in fighting on 20 August, Juba accused its rival, the Republic of the Sudan, of supporting rebels led by George Athor, a rebel general and unsuccessful Jonglei gubernatorial candidate who was a former SPLA commander, and Gordon Koang.[28]

Fighting continued between rebels, including dissident tribesmen, and the army and its allies, for several months after the cattle raid. In early December 2011, fighting between ethnic groups claimed 40 lives in
Jalle after a 5 December rebel attack on the town. Later in the month, on 19 December, Athor was reportedly killed by army troops in Central Equatoria, apparently while returning to South Sudan from a recruiting expedition in Rwanda, in what was hailed as "good news" by South Sudanese parliamentarians. Late on 24 December, SPLA troops fired on Christmas Eve churchgoers in Pigi County, a center of the uprising, leaving four dead. A spokesman for the army said it was investigating the "unfortunate" attack. On 25 December, the Nuer White Army threatened to "wipe out" the Murle altogether and attack United Nations and SPLA personnel if they interfered. Around the same time, Lou Nuer youth were blamed for an attack on Murle villages near Pibor that caused an unknown number of casualties.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) deployed peacekeepers to Pibor on 30 December in an effort to avert an attack by 6,000 armed Lou Nuer youths, deputy coordinator Lisa Grande said. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNMISS head Hilde Johnson called on Lou Nuer and Murle fighters alike to lay down their arms and allow the government of South Sudan to work with them toward a lasting solution to the crisis.

At 3 pm on 31 December between 3–6,000 Lou Nuer tribesmen attacked a part of Pibor not protected by the UN peacekeepers. Houses were reported to have been set on fire and much of the town, including the airport and main hospital, were occupied. Scores of people are reported dead and 20,000 displaced. The Lou Nuer were said to be pursuing members of the Murle who have fled southwards. The South Sudanese government promised to send more army personnel and 2,000 police to the town to reinforce the 800 troops already there. The healthcare charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said that it lost contact with 130 of its staff who were forced to flee into the bush due to the attack.[37] MSF said that a hospital and two outreach clinics were overrun, with some reports stating that the hospital had been set on fire. Looting was said to have taken place at MSF facilities.

2012

By 2 January, the majority of the Lou Nuer forces were said to have left Pibor and started to move to the southeast with a UN spokesman saying they were "almost certainly looking for cattle". The UN said that it had successfully held the main part of Pibor alongside South Sudanese army troops but that a MSF clinic had been overrun. The UN was advising people in the area to "disperse into the bush for their safety". Estimates for the number of displaced ranged up to 50,000, and more than 30 were killed with as many as 80 left injured. The SPLA dispatched 3,000 soldiers and 800 police to support the government's garrison in Pibor. On 5 January, Joshua Konyi, the commissioner of Pibor County and a Murle, estimated that 2,182 women and children and 959 men were killed, 1,293 children were abducted, and 375,186 cows were stolen.

Genocide warnings

In 2010, the CIA issued a warning that "over the next five years,...a new mass killing or genocide is most likely to occur in southern Sudan." The Nuer White Army released a statement stating its intention to "wipe out the entire Murle tribe on the face of the earth as the only solution to guarantee long-term security of
Nuer’s cattle” and activists, including Minority Rights Group International, warn of genocide in the current Jonglei conflict.