The government of Sudan (GoS) continued its “summer offensive” in April 2016 characterised by two major trends. Firstly, it continued with the ground offensive it began in March 2016, pressing hard against the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N) particularly in the counties of Heiban, Delami and Umdorien. Secondly, it tried to consolidate its positions in the villages it had captured from SPLA-N, namely Alazrag village (in Heiban County) and Mardis village (in Delami County).

Once more, civilians were affected in terms of deaths, injuries and internal displacement as they moved from place to place in search of safety. They also continued to suffer loss and damage to food and property (including houses, food stocks, animals and crops in the fields).

The impact of the conflict on children was particularly marked in April. There has been a significant increase in the number of children killed and injured by bombs – in total five children were killed and 22 were injured, of which 11 were from Delami County alone. In addition, schools have been bombed and others closed due to the fighting, particularly those near the front line.

In addition, our monitors verified and confirmed many incidents of human rights violations but due to the intensive fighting and the accompanying security risks, they were unable to access certain locations in order to verify and confirm all incidents. As a result of the violence, 15 people (six men, four women and five children) were killed; 37 people (eight men, seven women and 22 children) were injured; 95 animals were killed and three more injured. Overall, the monitors documented a total of 72 incidents of aerial bombardments, shelling and ground fighting in Southern Kordofan.

For those incidents where verification and confirmation were not possible, this is specified in the report.
In its bombardment of Southern Kordofan, the GoS has not made a distinction between civilian settlements and military targets and consequently it is the civilians who continue to suffer most from the violence. More critically, the intensive aerial bombardments carried out by GoS have succeeded in creating a climate of fear which discourages the population from carrying out their daily activities. April is the month in which the communities usually undertake land clearance in preparation for planting but the aerial bombing has significantly undermined these agricultural activities. In addition, the capture of Mardis village, by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) at the end of March, has meant that there is currently insufficient land for cultivation.

Below are the incidents of violence and human rights violations reported by our monitors in Heiban, Delami, Tobo (Al Buram) and Umdorien counties in April.

**Heiban County**

Heiban County faced a huge confrontation between SPLA-N and the SAF this month with multiple front lines including at Alazrag Payam in eastern Heiban and Dabi Payam in western Heiban. There were at least 13 aerial bombardments and seven incidents of ground fighting, with the reported shelling incidents resulting in four people being killed, including a child. In addition, three men, five women, six children were injured.

As government troops continued to penetrate Alazrag Payam, most of the civilians fled, seeking refuge in safer places. There was no let up in the aerial bombardments and shelling which started in March, targeting the payam and the villages within it. Five schools were closed down with school children being part of the displaced communities. Most of the civilians in the payam went to live in the mountains and on river banks. Nyakima village experienced heavy shelling and bombing more than any other village.

Around 15 villages in the county have lost their farms this year as government troops occupied their areas, increasing the problem of food scarcity. Unfortunately, the occupied areas are fertile land on which most Heiban civilians depend in terms of agricultural production and food. Apart from the fact that many people could not access their land for cultivation either because it was occupied by SAF or due to the fighting, many others could not fully prepare their farms for planting due to the fear of bombs, raising the possibility of famine in the coming months.

Below is a report of the incidents from our monitors:

- **On 3 April at 1.00pm,** two MiG jet fighters dropped two bombs in Upper Kauda Village, Eldo Payam. A woman and three children were injured and taken to Mother of Mary Hospital for treatment. As a result of the bombing, six huts were completely burned down with all their household effects and food stocks including four sacks of sorghum, five sacks of groundnuts and two sacks of simsim (sesame seed). **On the same day, at 1.05pm,** planes dropped three bombs in Kumo village, Kumbur Payam, killing a woman and injuring six other people – two men, two women and two children. The first bomb fell on the fence of Hakima Health Training Institute, the second one fell within the compound but caused no damage while the third fell on the northern side of the institute and caused damage to buildings. Furthermore, four huts were completely burned down with everything inside including a sack of sorghum. Additionally, two offices of the local authority with their assets were completely destroyed.

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2 Our monitors were unable to get additional information at the time as the staff of the institute had evacuated in order to avoid other bombs.
On 4 April at 8.25am, the village of Shaibun in Dabi Payam was shelled by SAF but there were no casualties and no damage. At 4.04pm, SAF artillery fired another two shells at the village but there were no casualties. Then at 3.07pm, in Janain village, Heiban Payam, an Antonov dropped three bombs which destroyed three mango trees, a cow shed, a field planted with onion, cucumber and tomatoes but there were no human casualties. From 5.05pm to 5.25pm, an Antonov dropped 14 bombs in Kujur-Shabia village in Eldo Payam killing two civilians and injuring a woman and a 13-year old child. Two of the bombs did not explode and are still in the ground, and therefore present an ongoing risk. Furthermore, two pigs were killed and three huts were burned with all their assets and food items including four sacks of sorghum, half a sack of simsim (sesame seed), two sacks of groundnuts, three sacks of beans and one sack of okra inside. Another hut was slightly damaged.

On 7 April, at 11.20am, an Antonov dropped four bombs on Nyakima village, Alazrag Payam, which killed a man, injured another, and killed 33 goats and 21 sheep. On the same day, at 4.00pm, 12 artillery shells were fired on Nyakima village from the direction of Kadrony in Delami County which is currently occupied by government troops but no casualties were reported.

On 9 April, at 12.35pm, two artillery shells were fired on Hajr Medani village, Alazrag Payam but did not cause any casualties.

On 10 April, at 11.25am, two MiG jet fighters dropped ten bombs on Kowarli village but one of them did not explode. Two houses were destroyed with all their assets and another two were slightly damaged. Three goats, one pig and fifteen hens were killed but no casualties were recorded.

On 11 April, two MiG jet fighters dropped ten bombs on Kowarli village but one of them did not explode. Two houses were destroyed with all their assets and another two were slightly damaged. Three goats, one pig and fifteen hens were killed but no casualties were recorded.

On 18 April, at 2.00am, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) - a government militia - looted eleven cows from Tajura village in Kumbur Payam. The cows were allegedly driven to Amdual village in Talodi County which is currently controlled by government troops.

On 19 April, at 8.50am, an Antonov dropped three bombs in Ougy village but they landed in a forest and caused no damage. At 9.00am, the same plane dropped another three bombs in Hajr-Bago, Alazrag Payam, completely destroying four huts and four sacks of sorghum.

On 20 April, at 11.00am, from the direction of Kadronyi in Abri village, currently controlled by the government, SAF troops fired 17 rockets on Nyakima village. Although there were no casualties from the attack, it caused sufficient fear in the community that many people ran away from the village. On the same day, at 2.35pm, in middle Umdurdu village in Kumbur Payam, 25 cows belonging to a citizen were looted by the PDF who came from the direction of Tuse village in Talodi Payam. At 3.00pm, 32 cattle were looted from Tembera village, Kumbur Payam, again by PDF elements. They were allegedly driven to Umdehelip village, Talodi County, which is currently under the control of government troops.
• On 22 April, at 6.00pm, 47 cows were looted by the PDF at Umdurdu Konjani village in Kumbur Payam. Again it is alleged they were taken to Umdehelip village.

• On 25 April, at 7.30am, an Antonov plane dropped three bombs at Nyakima village but they fell in a forest and caused no casualties or damage.

• On 27 April, at 11.00am, an Antonov dropped two bombs at Krono village in Alazrag Payam. The bombs fell about one kilometre away from peoples’ homes but caused no casualties or damage. Later, on the same day, an Antonov dropped seven bombs in Nyakima village, Alazrag Payam, destroying 45 fruit trees (mango, lemon and guava) but there were no human casualties.

• On 28 April, at 1.30pm, an Antonov dropped four bombs on Troror village in Dabi Payam and an animal was killed.

• On 29 April, at 1:54am, Koruna village, Alazrag Payam, was hit by four artillery shells from the direction of Sarfai village in Delami Payam which is currently controlled by government troops but caused no casualties or damage. Then at 9.18am, Nyakima village was hit by 27 artillery shells again appearing to come from the direction of Sarfai village. There were no casualties but 27 fruit trees were destroyed.

Delami County

The Sudan government continued to carry out systematic and targeted aerial bombardment of the civilian populations in Delami County. During the month of April, our monitors documented a total of 11 incidents consisting of seven incidents of aerial bombardment, three shellings and one incident of looting. As a result of the violence, a woman and a man were killed and the injured include 12 children, a woman and three men. In addition, four huts and three granaries were burned, a school damaged and four goats killed.

• On 14 April, at 9.30am, SAF artillery targeted Tamau and Kulurina villages, in Sabat Payam. Four shells were fired on Tamau village and two shells on Kulurina but, fortunately, there were no deaths, damage or injuries. Then at 3.44pm, at Nyukur village, Nyukur Payam, an Antonov dropped a bomb and killed one woman, injured two children and killed four goats and three chickens. It also burned three houses and destroyed three granary stores. A minute later a bomb was also dropped on Sanjak village, Nyukur Payam, but it caused no injuries. At 3.45pm, an Antonov dropped one bomb on Marada village, Tunguli Payam, but no damage or casualties were reported.

• On 19 April, at 11.15am, a Sukhoi jet bomber dropped five bombs on Lumberi village, Aberi Payam, injuring two men and one child.

• On 21 April, at 6.12pm, a Sukhoi jet bomber dropped two bombs on Tojor village, Aberi Payam, but no casualties or damage were reported.

• On 25 April, at 3.00pm, using light weapons, PDF militia looted 60 cows of a citizen in Umbrila village, Nyukur Payam.
On 26 April, at 10.30am, an Antonov dropped four bombs on Keyrally village, Tunguli Payam, killing a man and injuring a woman and nine children.

On 29 April, at 2.30pm, an Antonov dropped 12 bombs on Hadara village, Umethan Payam. The bombs landed on a school damaging it, killing a teacher and injuring 11 pupils. The bombing also completely burned down a hut.

**Tobo (Al Buram) County**

In comparison to March 2016, there was not much military activity in Tobo County in April probably due to the SAF wanting to consolidate the positions they captured in March 2016 (see our [March update](#)). Consequently, there was only one military incident in Tobo County for the whole of April, as opposed to seven incidents in the month of March.

On 12 April, at 4.00pm, an Antonov dropped four bombs in Tenassa village, Tabanya Payam, completely cutting off the right hand of a little boy and injured his sister and a brother as well as an old man. The bombs also burned down two houses including fifteen sacks of sorghum, meaning that all family food stocks for the entire year were lost, putting the family at risk of hunger for the rest of the year.

**Umdorien County**

There were at least 40 incidents of violence and human rights violations by the SAF in Umdorien County in April 2016. There were at least 101 bombs dropped and 201 shells fired by SAF planes and artillery respectively. As a result, four men, two women and four children were killed and those injured included a man, a woman and a child. At least 16 animals were killed and three injured.

On 1 April at 1.00pm, SAF fired more than 80 shells on Andulu village, Andulu Payam, from the direction of Karkarai village, but no casualties were reported. At 4.00pm, an Antonov dropped three bombs on Enbal village, Andulu Payam, and killed two goats but no human casualties were reported.

On 2 April at 2.00pm, an Antonov dropped three bombs on Kotmala village, Andulu Payam, but no casualties were registered. Also, at 2.00pm, an Antonov again dropped three bombs on Andulu village. but there were no casualties. At 4.00pm, a ground attack by the PDF, on Umserndiba village, Tangal Payam, got underway and an Antonov dropped one bomb on the same village, killing a 12 year old child. An hour later, an Antonov bombed Elbaro village, Andulu Payam, dropping three bombs but no casualties were reported. SAF fired fired 40 shells on Umserndiba village and an elderly man and a woman were killed. There was also widespread shelling of other villages targeting Tolombei, Kotmala, Karkarai and Ekogngal, all in Andulu Payam. All the shelling was carried out during daytime and the total number of shells fired was at least 42 (seven in Tolombei, ten in Kotmala, five in Karkarai and 20 in Ekogngal) but there were no casualties as people ran to hide in the mountains.
On 4 April during the day, an Antonov dropped a bomb in Kurji village, two bombs in Umserndiba village and three bombs in Karkarai village but no civilian casualties were reported.

On 5 April, at 9.41am, an Antonov dropped a bomb on Enbal village, Andulu Payam, killing a woman and injuring a child, in addition to killing four goats. A Bishop who witnessed the bombing said, “…during the ground fighting, civilians ran to the mountains and caves and some of them just came down yesterday. The following day the lady was taking water up the mountains to her very old grandmother as she could not get down when the Antonov appeared and dropped bombs that killed her.”

On 9 April, there were three aerial bombings on Umserndiba village but our monitors could not confirm the exact times of these bombings. An Antonov dropped six bombs and a MiG jet fighter fired three rockets but there were no casualties. However, the aerial bombardment seemed to be in support of a ground offensive by the PDF who were using both light and heavy weapons.

On 10 April, at an unconfirmed time, an Antonov dropped 18 bombs on Umserndiba village killing three children.

On 11 April, at an unconfirmed time, an Antonov dropped two bombs on Abulaila village, Ngorban Payam, but no casualties were reported. On the same day, at an unconfirmed time, an Antonov dropped 12 bombs on Umserndiba village again but no casualties were reported.

On 17 April, at 4.00pm, SAF fired eight artillery shells on Tabula village, Tangal Payam, killing three men and injuring a man and a woman, in addition to burning down four settlements.

On 19 April, at 3pm, an Antonov dropped four bombs on Etalabung village, Andulu Payam, killing four goats and burning down a settlement, including 23 sacks of sorghum. Earlier at 2.10pm, the same Antonov had dropped six bombs in Tangal village but there were no casualties. On 28 April, at an unconfirmed time, two children were killed by an unexploded ordinance in the grazing area of Karkarai village, Andulu Payam, where they were grazing animals.

Unconfirmed reports:
The following incidents were reported by eyewitnesses but our monitors were unable to make a visit to the affected locations for independent confirmation due to high levels of insecurity and the attendant risks.

Heiban County
On 6 April, at 11.57am, an Antonov dropped four bombs on Janian village and injured two civilians (one woman and a child).

Umdorien County
- On 12 April 2016 at 4.00pm, an Antonov dropped three bombs on Kurji village, Tangal Payam. At 5.00pm, an Antonov dropped three bombs on Umdorien village, Ngorban Payam. Also at 5.00pm, SAF fired seven artillery shells on Umserndiba village, Tangal Payam.
On 13 April, at 8.00am and 9.00am, our monitors were informed that there was artillery shelling of Umserndiba village, Tangal Payam, by SAF. The first shelling consisted of four rockets and the second 19 rockets. On 14th April, 4.00pm, an Antonov dropped two bombs on Tangal grazing area, Kurji village, Tangal Payam, very close to a mountain top water tank in an area where internally displaced persons were sheltering.

On 17 April, at an unknown time, there was a ground attack by PDF on Alatmor village, Tangal Payam, leading to ground fighting with SPLA-N.

On 21 April, during daytime, an Antonov dropped two bombs on Umserndiba village and six bombs on Tawlulu village, both in Tangal Payam.

On 25 April, at 7.32pm, an Antonov dropped ten bombs on Tangal grazing area, in Umserndiba village, Tangal Payam.

On 27 April, during daytime, there was serious ground fighting as a result of a shelling attack by PDF and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), both militias of the Sudan government, on Western Umserndiba village, Tangal Payam, with the PDF using various types of light and heavy weapons to shell.

On 30 April, at 1.00pm, two MiG jet fighters dropped two bombs on Kurji village, in Tangal Payam, but it was not possible to confirm the details.

Conclusion

The violence from SAF’s aerial bombardments and shelling against civilian areas in Southern Kordofan continued to take its toll on communities. In April 2016, our monitors recorded a total of 72 incidents of aerial bombardments, shelling and ground fighting, down from 81 incidents in March. However, although, the number of incidents recorded was slightly less than in March, there were more people reported killed – 15 in April as opposed to 11 in March. Significantly, children continued to suffer considerable violence with five schools closed due to their proximity to the fighting, five children died and 22 others injured.

Apart from human casualties, people continued to suffer damage and destruction to livestock, crops, shelter and other personal effects, further aggravating the conditions of living and raising the spectre of famine in the coming few months. In addition to animals injured or killed, the number of livestock looted was high. Our monitors documented looting by the PDF in Heiban County that amounted to 115 heads of cattle while 60 were looted by the same militia in Delami County. Local communities in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states believe strongly that the targeting of their food crops, food stocks, livestock and other property constitutes a key government strategy to totally destroy their livelihoods both in an effort to force the population into submission and to make any post-conflict scenario even more challenging.

The RSF are Sudanese paramilitary forces and have their roots in the Janjaweed militias, used during the armed conflict in Darfur.