



Youth Citizen Observer Network (YCON)

Report on the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) July 9, 2023

Introduction:

South Kordofan and Blue Nile, commonly referred to as the Two areas, are two neighboring states geographically adjacent to South Sudan. They are also connected by political ties, as rebel leaders in the two regions joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in 1986 until South Sudan's secession in 2011.

After the secession of South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North was established under the leadership of Malik Agar from Blue Nile and Abdelaziz Adam Al-Hilu from South Kordofan. They led a rebellion against the central government in 2011 following the secession of South Sudan, and their rebellion continued until the December Revolution in 2018.

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement experienced a split in 2015, which led to the removal of their leader Malik Agar and the assumption of leadership by Abdelaziz Adam Al-Hilu in South Kordofan, represented in Blue Nile by General Joseph Toka. Meanwhile, Malik Agar formed an armed movement that eventually led to the signing of the Juba Agreement in 2020 within the Revolutionary Front alliance. This resulted in him becoming the Deputy Chairman of the Sovereignty Council following the outbreak of war on April 15. General Al-Hilu joined the talks in Juba at that time, but he did not reach an agreement with the government of Abdullah Hamdok, who visited the Kauda area, the stronghold of Al-Hilu's movement, as the first president to visit this region after the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's rebellion in 1986. His visit was intended for peace talks in Juba, but no agreement was reached.

The main demands of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdelaziz Al-Hilu, include secularism of the state, power and wealth redistribution, and a federal governance system, among other issues. The movement guards its project with over one hundred thousand fighters, according to observers.

This report covers the events that took place in South Kordofan State and the Blue Nile region between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdelaziz Al-Hilu, and the Sudanese army during the month of June 2023.

Methodology of the Report:

The information in this report was collected from network observers and state coordinators through a questionnaire. All observers and coordinators are trained to collect data using various methods. The report was prepared based on verified information gathered from the field.

Report Findings:

1 .South Kordofan:

How did the events in South Kordofan start?

According to the accounts of the observers, one narrative suggests that the problem started between citizens from areas under the control of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and citizens from areas under the control of the Sudanese government due to incidents of cattle theft. Later, unusual movements by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement began in areas where they are not usually present. The movement then started launching attacks in some areas where the army did not respond and its forces stationed in some camps in the eastern region did not resist. The movement gained control over Abu Al-Hassan, Al-Mansoura, Toma, and Al-Jabailat. The armed movements of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement also spread to areas such as Atumur, Al-Hamra, and Um Sharran. The situation later escalated into a confrontation between the army and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, with both sides exchanging artillery fire in areas such as Delouka, Al-Mushtarakah, and Balinga. The Sudanese Air Force also bombed the areas of Um Dual and several administrative units in the eastern localities. Following this, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement launched an attack on the city of Dilling on June 22, 2023. The army's command in Dilling was targeted, and a battle took place before the forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement withdrew from the city.

As a result of these events, the Sudanese armed forces withdrew from all small camps around Kadugli City, leaving only the camp in the Blinja area, which is about 15 kilometers away from Kadugli, and the command of the 14th Division within Kadugli City. No military reinforcements have arrived.

Citizen Recruitment and Child Recruitment:

Reports from South Kordofan did not indicate recruitment of citizens by either party, except for the state of alert declared by the armed forces for veterans and retired military personnel. Regarding areas under the control of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, the available information is limited, and it has not been confirmed. There is no news indicating that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement has recruited citizens to fight with them.

The information received from observers indicates that child recruitment usually occurs in such circumstances, and it has indeed happened in the current period. This puts both parties in clear violation of laws that prohibit child recruitment. A local observer in the eastern mountains stated that attempts to recruit children under the age of eighteen were rejected by the children's guardians, and such attempts ceased thereafter.

Assault on Citizens and Movement Restrictions:

No cases of direct assault on citizens by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement or the Sudanese army have been recorded. There have been no reports of harassment based on racial or tribal grounds. However, it is confirmed that the road linking Dilling and Kadugli was closed for several days in the Hajar Al-Jawad area by the Sudan

People's Liberation Movement, causing disruption of movement until it was reopened after a few days. The army also set up a checkpoint in the Karqul area. It is worth noting that the Rapid Support Forces are present in the Qoz locality and have established a checkpoint there after taking control of the city and the army camp in the Taybah area. Additionally, a curfew was imposed on June 26, 2023, within Kadugli City from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM. The government announced it through loudspeakers and threatened punishment for those who violated it.

Humanitarian Situation and Interventions:

After the attacks by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the confrontation with the army, the state witnessed displacement from the Qoz, Kajoli, and Dilling localities, as well as displacement from peripheral areas to inside Kadugli City. Some of the displaced people headed to Al-Obaid City, while others sought refuge in West Kordofan State. Some residents also fled to areas under the control of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

With the internal and external displacement, no humanitarian aid or relief operations have been observed from national or international organizations. The humanitarian situation in South Kordofan is in urgent need of assistance.

2. Blue Nile Region:

How did the events in the Blue Nile start?

The clashes in the Blue Nile occurred in the southern part of the region on Tuesday, June 27, 2023. The attack was initiated by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdelaziz Al-Hilu, with a strong force led by Joseph Toka. Heavy artillery was used by both sides (the armed forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement). The clashes included the southern countryside of the Kormok locality, which borders Ethiopia, as well as areas such as Khor Al-Budi, Al-Nadir, Al-Kaili, and Deim Mansour. Prior to these clashes, there were movements by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement forces in areas where they were not previously present, and they were stationed in the Khor Al-Budi area.

Observers from the Blue Nile reported that the area where the clashes took place witnessed military reinforcements from the Sudanese army, specifically from the 4th Infantry Division based in Al Damazin City.

Citizen Recruitment and Child Recruitment:

According to reports from the Blue Nile network observers, there is no recruitment of citizens from either side, but they reported the recruitment of children in the region.

Assault on Citizens and Movement Restrictions:

No cases of direct assault on citizens have been recorded. However, the situation is prone to change, possibly due to ethnic considerations. As for movement restrictions, cross-border trade between Sudan and Ethiopia through the Kormok border crossing has been halted as a result of these events.

Humanitarian Situation and Interventions:

According to the International Organization for Migration, more than 58,000 people have crossed the border into Ethiopia as refugees as a result of the clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdelaziz Al-Hilu, and the Sudanese army. Due to the conflicts, civilian activities have come to a halt, and the agricultural season has been affected as citizens are unable to move due to the lack of security, which threatens the farming season. The economic activity of citizens has completely ceased, yet no humanitarian organizations have intervened to assist the citizens.



