



**SCORCHED EARTH,**

**POISONED AIR**

SUDANESE GOVERNMENT FORCES  
RAVAGE JEBEL MARRA, DARFUR

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**Cover photo: Bourgu village, 8 April 2016.**  
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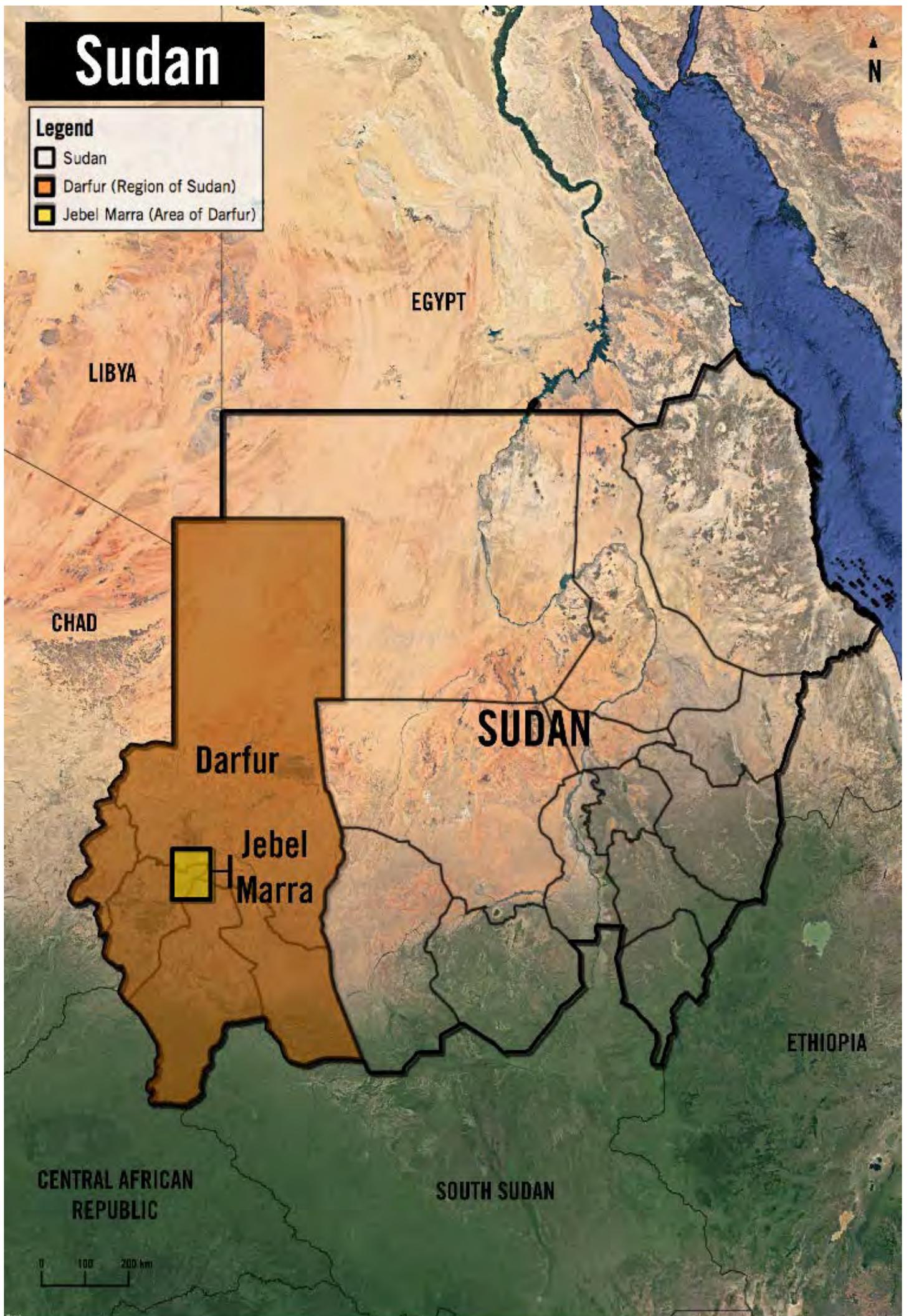
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# Sudan

## Legend

-  Sudan
-  Darfur (Region of Sudan)
-  Jebel Marra (Area of Darfur)



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2016, Sudanese government forces launched a large-scale military campaign in the Jebel Marra area in Darfur, Sudan. Co-ordinated ground and air attacks targeted locations throughout Jebel Marra until May. After that, the seasonal rains in Darfur intensified, making ground attacks impractical throughout most of the area; air operations continued through mid-September.

The government forces included members of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), as well as militia forces referred to by the local population as 'Janjaweed'. Regular and militia forces fought in concert throughout the campaign.

The government launched the military campaign to attack and gain control over positions held by members of the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW), and, in turn, to put an end to the "rebellion" in Darfur. Prior to the offensive, the government had accused the SLA/AW of ambushing military convoys, hijacking commercial vehicles, and attacking civilians.

Government forces fought with the SLA/AW on numerous occasions throughout the campaign, dislodging the group from several strategic positions and greatly reducing the amount of territory it controls in Jebel Marra.

At the end of July 2016, the UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that as many as 251,000 people may have been displaced by violence in Jebel Marra. Many of the survivors fled to areas inside Jebel Marra, outside of government controlled areas, where they remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors and vulnerable to further attacks.

Credible and consistent information about the impact of the violence on the civilian population living inside Jebel Marra is extraordinarily difficult to obtain. Due to restrictions on access by the government, no international or national journalist, human rights investigator, or humanitarian actor has been permitted to carry out any credible assessment of the human rights or humanitarian situation in areas affected by the conflict in Jebel Marra in 2016. The government has also prevented the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) from accessing the affected areas.

Due to the access restrictions, Amnesty International conducted the research for this report remotely.

Amnesty International interviewed 231 people by phone or over the internet, including 184 survivors of abuses carried out by government forces in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016. Amnesty has corroborated the testimony from these survivors and witnesses with satellite imagery, still photographs, UN and media reports, and reports by local human rights monitors.

## **ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIANS**

Amnesty International has documented a large number of serious violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law committed by Sudanese government forces, including scores of instances where government forces deliberately targeted civilians and civilian property.

The violations included the bombing of civilians and civilian property, the unlawful killing of men, women, and children, the abduction and rape of women, the forced displacement of civilians, and the looting and destruction of civilian property, including the destruction of entire villages.

Survivors and local human rights monitors provided Amnesty International with the names of 367 civilians, including 95 children, who were killed in Jebel Marra by government forces between January and September 2016. Most civilians were killed by bombs or were shot while fleeing attacks. Numerous other

civilians, including children, died as a result of starvation, dehydration, or exposure to the cold in the aftermath of the attacks.

Amnesty International interviewed four survivors of rape, ten witnesses of rape, and received numerous second-hand accounts of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women.

Hundreds of villages were attacked between January and September 2016. Using satellite imagery, Amnesty International was able to confirm that 171 villages were destroyed or damaged. Numerous villages were attacked multiple times, including many that were torched after they had been abandoned by the local residents. The objective of nearly all of these attacks appears to have been to attack the entire population of these villages. The overwhelming majority of the attacked villages had no formal armed opposition presence at the time of the attack.

## **REPORTS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACKS**

Amnesty International interviewed 56 residents of Jebel Marra, 46 civilians and ten members of SLA/AW, who alleged that Sudanese government forces utilized “poisonous smoke” during attacks in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016. These individuals, all of whom are either survivors of the alleged attacks or cared for survivors and victims, provided Amnesty International with substantial testimonial and photographic evidence in support of the allegations. The evidence strongly suggests that Sudanese government forces repeatedly used chemical weapons during attacks in Jebel Marra.

Survivors and caregivers described a wide variety of ailments that victims of alleged chemical weapons attacks experienced during the hours and days after exposure to the alleged chemical weapons agents.

Based on testimony from caregivers and survivors, Amnesty International estimates that between 200 and 250 people may have died as a result of exposure to the chemical weapons agents, with many – or most – being children. The vast majority of survivors of the suspected chemical weapons attacks have had no access to adequate medical care.

Amnesty International documented alleged chemical weapons attacks in and around at least 32 villages in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016. Several of the villages were attacked multiple times. The earliest attacks occurred during the start of the government’s offensive in mid-January. The attacks are ongoing. The most recent attack recorded by Amnesty occurred on 9 September 2016.

Exact identification of the specific chemical agents allegedly used in the attacks documented in this report would require the collection of environmental samples and physiological samples from those directly or indirectly exposed to the alleged chemical agents. An identification would also require an analysis of weapon remnants used during the attacks. Given that access to Jebel Marra is severely restricted, it was not possible for Amnesty International to obtain such samples.

Amnesty International asked two chemical weapons experts to independently review the clinical signs and symptoms revealed by the photographic and video evidence and interview notes. They are both respected experts with experience in unconventional munitions, including biological and chemical warfare agents, and are experienced in the diagnosis of exposure to chemical weapons agents.

Both experts found that there was credible evidence to strongly suggest that chemical weapons agents were used in the attacks documented in this report.

Both experts concluded the clinical signs and symptoms were most consistent with exposure to a class of chemical warfare agents called vesicants or blister agents, which include lewisite, sulphur mustard and nitrogen mustard. However, they also asserted that it was possible that survivors were exposed to a combination of chemicals in addition to blister agents.

## **UNAMID AND THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN JEBEL MARRA**

UNAMID has been unable to provide protection from attacks for any civilians in Jebel Marra, unless the civilians managed to get themselves to the UNAMID base in Sortoni in northern Jebel Marra or to other UNAMID-protected internally displaced person camps outside of Jebel Marra.

## **LEGAL ANALYSIS**

The instances of indiscriminate attacks and direct targeting of civilians documented in this report are clear violations of the cardinal rule of distinction in International Humanitarian Law and amount to war crimes.

The attacks against civilians in Jebel Marra, particularly the forced displacement and unlawful killings, were widespread as well as systematic and appear to have been carried out as part of a government policy and may therefore constitute crimes against humanity.

The use of chemical weapons documented in this report amount to war crimes.

On 15 September, Amnesty International sent a summary of its complete findings to officials of the Sudanese government seeking their input regarding the violations of international law documented in the report. On the 27 September Amnesty received a written response from the government of Sudan denying the use of chemical weapons and other allegations detailed in this report. A copy of the Government of Sudan's response can be found in the appendix at the end of this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Amnesty International calls on the government of Sudan to immediately allow all humanitarian actors and UNAMID unfettered access to all of Jebel Marra and to suppress and end all violations of international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) being committed by members of the armed forces and allied militias in Jebel Marra.

Amnesty International calls on the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to establish a permanent presence inside Jebel Marra and investigate and publicly report on allegations of violations of IHL and IHRL by members of Sudanese government forces and opposition forces in Jebel Marra.

Amnesty International calls on the UN Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council to apply sufficient political pressure on the government of Sudan so that it permits UNAMID and all humanitarian actors unfettered access into Jebel Marra, so that they are allowed to provide humanitarian assistance and, in the case of UNAMID, establish operating bases and implement proactive patrols.

Amnesty International calls on the UN Security Council to expand the current UN arms embargo on Darfur to cover the whole of Sudan, and thus help to prevent further violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in the country.

Amnesty International calls on the UN Security Council to recommend that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) obtain clarification about the nature and extent of Sudan's chemical weapons program, demand that Sudan co-operate fully with the OPCW, and reserve the right to enact other measures to support the OPCW's efforts, including the creation of a OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify individuals, entities, groups, or governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the development or use of chemicals as weapons in the Republic of Sudan.

Amnesty International calls on States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to request that the Executive Council of the OPCW obtain clarification from the government of Sudan about its alleged use of chemical weapons in Jebel Marra in accordance with Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention. If the Executive Council is unable to obtain adequate clarification from the government of Sudan about its alleged use of chemical weapons in Jebel Marra, then Amnesty International calls on States Parties to request an on-site challenge inspection in accordance with Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

# 2. METHODOLOGY

This report details serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that took place during the government offensive in the Jebel Marra region in Darfur between January and September 2016.

All the research was conducted remotely, from outside of Sudan.

Amnesty International was not able to visit Jebel Marra or any part of Darfur due to access restrictions. The government of Sudan does not permit any national or international human rights investigators, journalists, or humanitarian actors to operate inside the areas of Jebel Marra that are the focus of this report.

The government also prevents UNAMID from having any meaningful access to the areas in Jebel Marra affected by violence as documented in this report. Despite the presence of several bases in the area surrounding Jebel Marra, all UNAMID reporting is either second-hand or based on observations made from outside of Jebel Marra.

Given the lack of access, the region's geographic isolation, the absence of a reliable cellular network, and the serious risks facing any local resident who attempts to provide information to journalists, human rights investigators, or any foreign actor, credible information about the impact of the violence on the civilian population living inside Jebel Marra is extraordinarily difficult to find.

At present, only Radio Dabanga, a Netherlands-based news outlet reporting exclusively on Sudan, and a very few local Sudanese human rights monitoring organizations are reporting on the situation inside Jebel Marra. Amnesty International decided to initiate this investigation based largely on reports by these few organizations and by the UN about the major government offensive in Jebel Marra in January 2016.

Amnesty International's investigation was carried out by two researchers with extensive contact networks inside Jebel Marra, one of whom is from the area and fluent in Fur, the main local language.

Between February and September 2016, Amnesty International interviewed 184 survivors and witnesses of attacks in Jebel Marra, including 108 men, 73 women, and 3 children. Amnesty International also interviewed UN staff, humanitarian workers, and local human rights monitors.

Amnesty International interviewed 22 members of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Abdul Wahid.

Amnesty International interviewed the survivors and witnesses individually. Interviews generally lasted between 30 and 120 minutes. The majority of the interviews were conducted in Fur, a minority were conducted in Arabic, and a few were conducted in English.

Interviewees were informed about the nature and purpose of the research as well as how the information they provided would be used. Oral consent was obtained from each interviewee prior to the start of the interview. No incentives were provided to interviewees in exchange for their accounts.

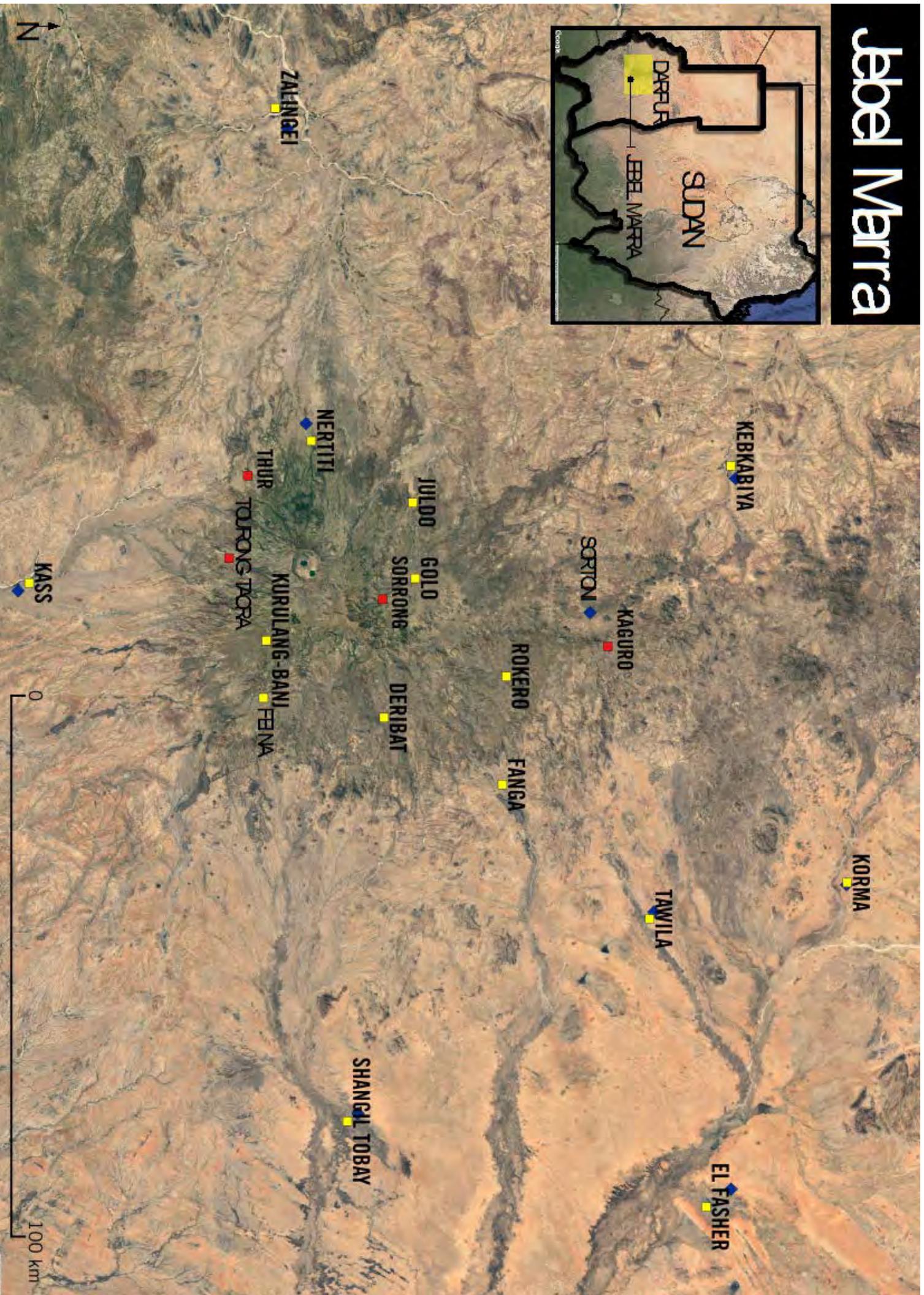
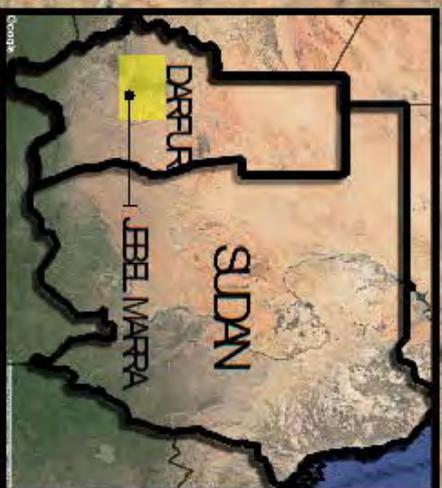
Interview notes and photographic evidence related to reports of chemical weapons attacks were shared with two chemical weapons experts. Their conclusions are included in the report. They are both respected experts with experience in unconventional munitions including biological and chemical warfare agents and are experienced in the diagnosis of exposure to chemical weapons agents.

The majority of the villages referenced in this report do not appear on any publicly available map. The locations of these villages were determined by interviewing residents or former residents of the villages who described the geography of the village and the surrounding area to such a degree that it allowed Amnesty International to identify the village in high resolution satellite imagery.

Interviewees were afraid of reprisals from government authorities if they were identified as having spoken to Amnesty. As a result, information that could identify interviewees has been removed for their security. Pseudonyms have been used in all cases.

In June 2016, prior to the debate in the UN Security Council (UNSC) about the renewal of the UNAMID mandate, Amnesty International shared its preliminary findings with members of the UNSC, as well as with other UNAMID donors and troop-contributing countries. On 15 September, Amnesty International sent a summary of its complete findings to officials of the Sudanese government seeking their input regarding the violations of international law documented in the report. On the 27 September Amnesty received a written response from the government of Sudan denying the use of chemical weapons and other allegations detailed in this report. A copy of the Government of Sudan's response can be found in the appendix at the end of this report.

# Jebel Marra



# 3. BACKGROUND

## 3.1 JEBEL MARRA, DARFUR



A family riding on donkeys near the village of Golol, southern Jebel Marra, 2008. ©Jérôme Tubiana

Darfur is a region of the Republic of Sudan. It is composed of Sudan's five western most states.<sup>1</sup>

Darfur was an independent state from the mid-seventeenth century until 1874 when it became part of the Turco-Egyptian Sudan. In 1898, Darfur's independence was restored until 1916 when it was annexed to the then Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, which became the independent Republic of Sudan on 1 January 1956.<sup>2</sup>

Darfur is approximately 500,000km<sup>2</sup>. The UN estimates that the population is 7.5 million.<sup>3</sup>

Jebel Marra is a 5,000km<sup>2</sup> volcanic massif in the centre of Darfur. It is approximately 100km in length along its north-south axis and 70km in width along the widest part of its east-west axis. The Deriba Crater, the

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<sup>1</sup>North Darfur, South Darfur, Central Darfur, West Darfur and East Darfur.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of Darfur before it was annexed, see R.S. O'Fahey, *The Darfur Sultanate: A History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2008; for a history of modern day Darfur see M.W. Daly *Darfur's Sorrow: A history of Destruction and Genocide*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> "Facts: Key facts and figures for Sudan with a focus on Darfur" UN Resident Coordinators Office, Sudan, 2011, available at [reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/darfur\\_fact\\_sheet\\_v32.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/darfur_fact_sheet_v32.pdf)

massif's highest point, rises to over 3,000m and contains two saline lakes. Jebel Marra is Darfur's most prominent geographic entity and home to its most fertile land. The area consists of approximately 1,500 towns, villages and hamlets.<sup>4</sup>

Jebel Marra is the historic homeland of the ethnic Fur people, who still populate the area, and it has served as the redoubt for the Fur in modern times, both during the Fur-Arab wars in the 1980s and throughout the current Darfur conflict.<sup>5</sup>

In 2002, Jebel Marra became the seat of rebellion as deserters from Sudan's military and dissatisfied politicians joined with intellectuals and members of local self-defence groups to form the Darfur Liberation Front, which became the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). It was from and within Jebel Marra that many of the current conflict's earliest attacks against government forces were launched.<sup>6</sup>

## 3.2 THE CURRENT CONFLICT IN DARFUR

Armed conflict between the government of Sudan and armed opposition groups has plagued Darfur since 2003.<sup>7</sup> The conflict has been characterized by a high level of violence directed against civilians. Thirteen years on, the violence continues.<sup>8</sup>

The conflict's root causes are manifold and include underdevelopment, marginalization, resource scarcity, and the repercussions from previous conflicts.<sup>9</sup> The proximate cause of the violence against civilians is well documented: in response to attacks by armed opposition groups, or to the presence of armed opposition groups, Sudanese government forces target not only armed opposition groups but also the populations of certain ethnic groups that the government accuses of supporting the insurgents. This counterinsurgency strategy, which the government continues to deploy, has produced horrific levels of death, destruction, and displacement. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been killed by violence or by conflict-induced starvation, dehydration, and disease.<sup>10</sup> Myriad villages have been destroyed and countless livelihoods have been ruined.<sup>11</sup> Rape and other sexual violence against women have been endemic.<sup>12</sup> Approximately 3 million people remain displaced by the conflict inside Darfur or in refugee camps in eastern Chad.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For information about the geography of Jebel Marra see G.E. Wickens, *The Flora of Jebel Marra (Sudan Republic) and its geographical affinities*, Kew Bulletin Additional Series V, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1976.

<sup>5</sup> For a history of the Fur-Arab War see S. Harir, "Arab Belt' versus 'African Belt': Ethno-Political Conflict in Dar Fur and the Regional Cultural Factors," in *The Short-Cut to Decay: The Case of the Sudan*, edited by Sharif Harir and Terje Tvedt, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> For information about the Darfur Rebellion see V. Tanner and J. Tubiana "Divided They Fall: The Fragmentation of Darfur's Rebel Groups", Small Arms Survey, Switzerland, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> For a history of the current conflict in Darfur see Julie Flint and Alex De Waal, *Darfur: A New History of a Long War*, New York, Zed Books, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 1 July 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587); International Crisis Group, "The Chaos in Darfur," April 2015, available at [www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/hornof/africa/sudan/b110-the-chaos-in-darfur.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/hornof/africa/sudan/b110-the-chaos-in-darfur.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> For information about the roots cause of the Darfur conflict see: V. Tanner "Rule of Lawlessness: Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis", Interagency Paper, January 2005; A.G.M Ahmed and L. Manger, "Understanding the crisis in Darfur: Listening to Sudanese voices," BRIC, Bergen, 2007; A. de Waal, editor, *War in Darfur and the Search for Peace*, Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Darfur deaths 'could be 300,000', BBC News, April 23, 2008, available at, [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7361979.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7361979.stm); O. Degomme and D. Goha-Sappir "Patterns of Mortality in Darfur Conflict," *The Lancet*, vol. 375, 23 January 2010; E. Depoortere, et al. "Violence and Mortality in West Darfur, Sudan (2003-4): Epidemiological Evidence from OFur Surveys," *The Lancet*, vol. 364, 9 October 2004; D. Nabarro, "Mortality Projects for Darfur," presentation by David Nabarro, World Health Organization, 15 October 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan, Darfur: Too many people killed for no reason," (Index: AFR 54/008/2004), available at <file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/afr540082004en.pdf>. Human Rights Watch, "Darfur in Flames: Atrocities in Western Sudan," New York, 2004 available at [hrw.org/reports/2004/sudan0404](http://hrw.org/reports/2004/sudan0404); Human Rights Watch, "Darfur Destroyed: Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan," New York, 2004, available at [www.hrw.org/reports/2004/sudan0504](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/sudan0504); Human Rights Watch, "Chaos by Design", New York 2007 available at [www.hrw.org/reports/2007/sudan0907/sudan0907webcover.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/sudan0907/sudan0907webcover.pdf); Human Rights Watch, "Men with No Mercy", New York, 2014, available at [www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/sudan0915\\_4up.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/sudan0915_4up.pdf); M. Buchanan-Smith and S. Jaspers "Conflict, Camps, and Coercion: The Ongoing Livelihoods Crisis in Darfur", *Disasters*, 31 March 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan, Darfur, Rape as a Weapon of War: Sexual Violence and its consequences," July, 2004, available at <file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/afr540762004en.pdf>; Human Rights Watch, "Five Years On: No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur", New York, 2008, available at [www.hrw.org/reports/2008/darfur408/](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/darfur408/); Human Rights Watch, Mass Rape in Darfur: Sudanese Army Attacks Against Civilians in Tabit, New York, 2015, available at [www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/sudan0215\\_web.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/sudan0215_web.pdf); T. Gingerich and J. Leaning, "The Use of Rape as a Weapon of War in the Conflict in Darfur, Sudan," prepared for U.S. Agency for International Development/OTI, October, 2004, available at [https://s3.amazonaws.com/PHR\\_Reports/darfur-rape-as-a-weapon-2004.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/PHR_Reports/darfur-rape-as-a-weapon-2004.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> UN OCHA, "Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan," Issue 37, 5-11 September 2016, available at [reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA\\_Sudan\\_Weekly\\_Humanitarian\\_Bulletin\\_Issue\\_37\\_%285\\_-\\_11\\_September\\_2016%29.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA_Sudan_Weekly_Humanitarian_Bulletin_Issue_37_%285_-_11_September_2016%29.pdf); Refugees International, "Sudanese Refugees in Chad: Passing the Baton to no One," July, 2015, available at [static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/560b2d8de4b0a1d8c243a70b/1443573133844/150709\\_chad](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/560b2d8de4b0a1d8c243a70b/1443573133844/150709_chad)

### 3.3 THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT

The parties to the conflict in Darfur are normally considered to be the Sudanese government forces, militias allied to the government, commonly referred to as the “Janjaweed”, and armed groups opposed to the government.

The origins of the Janjaweed are complex and controversial, both in terms of their relationship with the government and with certain ethnic groups, notably the nomadic Arab tribes from which the majority of their members are drawn. Janjaweed fighting with government forces have perpetrated serious crimes against the civilian population throughout the conflict. In this report, the term Janjaweed is generally utilized only when it is part of a quote; otherwise, the term militia is employed.<sup>14</sup>

Regular forces in the Sudanese military are called the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). Throughout the conflict, the government of Sudan has utilized the SAF in concert with paramilitary forces including the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), the Central Reserve Police, and the Border Guards. Both the SAF and the various paramilitary groups have often fought alongside the militias.

Since 2013, many of the major government campaigns in Darfur have been led by members of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a Sudanese government force under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). Created in 2013, specifically to fight against armed opposition groups throughout Sudan, the RSF is reportedly better equipped than other government forces. In 2014 and 2015 the RSF carried out two counterinsurgency campaigns in Darfur, including one in Jebel Marra, during which the forces attacked villages, burned and looted homes, raped and beat villagers, extrajudicially executed civilians, and caused massive displacement of the civilian population. Many RSF commanders are also considered to be Janjaweed leaders.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the conflict there have been numerous different armed opposition groups and coalitions; however, the three largest armed opposition factions have largely stayed the same: the Justice and Equality Movement led by Gibril Ibrahim (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Army faction led by Minni Arku Minnawi (SLA/MM), and the Sudan Liberation Army faction led by Abdul Wahid Mohammed Ahmed el-Nur (SLA/AW). Two ethnic groups, Zaghawa and Fur, and to a large extent sub-sections of these groups related to the groups' leaders, have controlled most of the senior positions in these armed opposition groups. However, members from many other tribes, including Arab tribes, have also been represented. In 2005 and 2006, the main armed opposition factions started splintering, often along ethnic lines.<sup>16</sup>

In 2012, the three major Darfur armed opposition groups, together with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), an armed opposition group operating outside of Darfur, formed the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an ostensibly unified political and military coalition representing all of Sudan's significant armed opposition movements.<sup>17</sup> As of 2016, the SRF has achieved no tangible political or military accomplishments that have improved the security or economic situation of the populations that it purports to defend and represent.

The size of the areas controlled by armed opposition groups, and the degree of control, has varied significantly throughout the conflict. In 2016, the armed opposition groups control less territory than at any point since the start of the conflict. The JEM and the SLA/MM reportedly control only very small pockets in isolated parts of rural Darfur. At the start of 2016, the SLA/AW still controlled significant territory in Jebel Marra and a few isolated pockets outside of Jebel Marra; however, the size of its territory has decreased significantly as a result of the recent government offensive described in this report.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For information about the “Janjaweed” see J. Flint, “Beyond Janjaweed: Understanding the Militias of Darfur,” Small arms survey, 2009, available at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP-17-Beyond-Janjaweed.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP-17-Beyond-Janjaweed.pdf); J. Flint, “The Other War: Inter-Arab Conflict in Darfur,” Small Arms Survey, 2010, available at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP-22-The-Other-War-Inter-Arab-Conflict-in-Darfur.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP-22-The-Other-War-Inter-Arab-Conflict-in-Darfur.pdf); J. Loeb, “Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Negotiations With Armed Non-State Actors in Darfur, Sudan, 2003- 2012,” Overseas Development Institute, August 2012, available at [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publicationsopinion-files/8590.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publicationsopinion-files/8590.pdf), p. 21-24.

<sup>15</sup> For information about the RSF and their campaign in 2013 and 2014 see A. Kumar and O. Ismail, “The Janjaweed Reincarnate: Sudan's New Army of War Criminals,” The Enough Project, June 2014, available at [www.enoughproject.org/files/JanjaweedReincarnate\\_June2014.pdf](http://www.enoughproject.org/files/JanjaweedReincarnate_June2014.pdf); Human Rights Watch, “Men with No Mercy”, New York, 2014, available at [www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/sudan0915\\_4up.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/sudan0915_4up.pdf); UN Security Council Letter dated 16 January 2015 from the Vice-Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, 19 January 2015, available at [www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/31](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/31)

<sup>16</sup> V. Tanner and J. Tubiana “Divided They Fall: The Fragmentation of Darfur's Rebel Groups,” Small Arms Survey, Switzerland, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> A. McCutchen, “The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development,” Small arms Survey, Geneva, 2005, available at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP33-SRF.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP33-SRF.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document; Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW Commanders May and June 2016

The armed opposition groups, including the SLA/AW, are accused by the government of Sudan of utilizing tactics commonly associated with asymmetric warfare, including hiding amongst the civilian population in villages and inside internally displaced person (IDP) camps.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.4 THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE CONFLICT

The international community, led by the African Union and the United Nations, has responded to the conflict with a variety of different interventions, including referrals to international criminal justice, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping troops, an arms embargo, targeted sanctions, and political negotiations.

In July 2004, the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo on “all non-governmental entities and individuals, including the Janjaweed” operating in Darfur.<sup>20</sup> In March 2005, the UN Security Council expanded the embargo to include the government of Sudan.<sup>21</sup> Notably, the embargo applies only to the Darfur region of Sudan and places no restrictions on arms sales to entities or individuals, including the government of Sudan, for use in other parts of the country. The embargo has been ineffective.<sup>22</sup>

In September 2004, the UN Security Council called for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry (COI) to “investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Darfur by all parties, to determine also whether or not acts of genocide have occurred, and to identify perpetrators of such violations with a view to ensuring that those responsible are held accountable.”<sup>23</sup> In January 2005, the COI concluded that Sudanese government forces were responsible for violations of international law including, “indiscriminate attacks, including killing of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, pillaging and forced displacement,” that these violations amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity and that these crimes “may be no less serious or heinous than genocide.”<sup>24</sup> The report also concluded that there was credible evidence that armed opposition forces were responsible for violations of international law, including murder and pillage, which may amount to war crimes.<sup>25</sup>

In March 2005, the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC).<sup>26</sup> In March 2009 and July 2010, the Court issued arrest warrants for Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir.<sup>27</sup> The warrants of arrest are for five counts of crimes against humanity, two counts of war crimes, and three counts of genocide. Between 2007 and 2012 the Court also issued warrants of arrest for three other government officials and three members of armed opposition groups.<sup>28</sup> Sudan has not co-operated with the Court. The ICC has been unable to enforce the arrest warrants for President al-Bashir or any of the other government officials. In December 2014, the ICC prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda,

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<sup>19</sup> “North Darfur urges UNAMID to drive rebels out of Sortoni Camp,” *Sudan Tribune*, 7 July 2016, available at [www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article59538](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article59538); for analysis of the alleged militarization of Darfur’s displaced person camps see C. Kahn, “Conflict, Arms, and Militarization: The Dynamics of Darfur’s IDP Camps,” *Small Arms Survey*, Geneva, 2008, available at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP-15-Conflict-Arms-Militarization.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP-15-Conflict-Arms-Militarization.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> UN Security Council, Resolution 1556, para. 7-8, 2004, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1556\(2004\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1556(2004)).

<sup>21</sup> UN Security Council, Resolution 1591, para. 7, 2005, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1591\(2005\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1591(2005)).

<sup>22</sup> Small Arms Survey, “Broken promises: The arms embargo on Darfur since 2012,” July 2016, available at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB24-Darfur-Embargo.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB24-Darfur-Embargo.pdf); Small Arms Survey, “Business as usual: Arms flows to Darfur 2009-12,” September 2012, available at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB-20-Arms-flows-to-Darfur-2009-12.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB-20-Arms-flows-to-Darfur-2009-12.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1564, 2004, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1564\(2004\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1564(2004)); UN, “Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General,” 25 January 2005, p. 2, available at [www.un.org/news/dh/sudan/com\\_inq\\_darfur.pdf](http://www.un.org/news/dh/sudan/com_inq_darfur.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> UN, “Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General,” 25 January 2005, p. 4, available at [www.un.org/news/dh/sudan/com\\_inq\\_darfur.pdf](http://www.un.org/news/dh/sudan/com_inq_darfur.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> UN, “Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General,” 25 January 2005, p. 4, available at [www.un.org/news/dh/sudan/com\\_inq\\_darfur.pdf](http://www.un.org/news/dh/sudan/com_inq_darfur.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> UN Security Council, Resolution 1593, 2005, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1593\(2005\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1593(2005)).

<sup>27</sup> Warrant of Arrest for Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir in the case of The Prosecutor v. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, March 4, 2009, available at [www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc639078.pdf](http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc639078.pdf); Second Warrant of Arrest for Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir in the case of The Prosecutor v. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, 12 July 2010, available at [https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2010\\_04825.PDF](https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2010_04825.PDF)

<sup>28</sup> Warrant of Arrest for Ahmad Harun in the case of The Prosecutor v Ahmad Muhammad Harun (“Ahmad Harun”) and Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman (“Ali Kushayb”), 27 April 2007, available at [www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc279813.pdf](http://www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc279813.pdf); Warrant of Arrest for Ali Kushayb in the case of The Prosecutor v Ahmad Muhammad Harun (“Ahmad Harun”) and Ali Muhammad Al Abd-Al-Rahman (“Ali Kushayb”), 27 April 2007, available at [www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc279858.pdf](http://www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc279858.pdf); Warrant of Arrest for Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir in the case of The Prosecutor v. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir ) March 4, 2009, available at [www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc639078.pdf](http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc639078.pdf); Warrant of Arrest for Abdel Raheem Mohammad Hussein in the case of The Prosecutor v. Abdel Raheem Mohammad Hussein, 1 March, 2012, available at [www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc1344965.pdf](http://www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc1344965.pdf); Warrant of Arrest for Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain in the case of The Prosecutor v Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain, September 11, 2014; available at [www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc1831845.pdf](http://www.cc-cpi/iccdocs/doc/doc1831845.pdf)

told the UN Security Council that the “Council’s lack of foresight on what should happen in Darfur” left her with “no choice but to hibernate [the Court’s] activities in Darfur.”<sup>29</sup>

Between April 2003 and April 2004, the government of Sudan severely limited humanitarian access into Darfur.<sup>30</sup> In May 2004, the government started granting international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and UN agencies greater access; Darfur soon became the site of the world’s largest humanitarian operation. Humanitarian actors are widely credited with substantial reduction in malnutrition and disease-related mortality, which likely saved tens of thousands of lives.<sup>31</sup>

In March 2009, immediately after the ICC issued its first arrest warrant for President al-Bashir, Sudan expelled 16 NGOs from Darfur.<sup>32</sup> These organizations, 13 INGOs and three national NGOs, included most of the humanitarian agencies operating in Jebel Marra. There has been very little meaningful humanitarian access to Jebel Marra since the expulsions.<sup>33</sup> Most of the remaining NGOs providing humanitarian assistance inside Jebel Marra were expelled in 2010.<sup>34</sup>

The (limited) humanitarian space in Jebel Marra has continued to shrink each year. In February 2012, MSF-Spain was forced to shut down their hospital in Kaguro, northern Jebel Marra, which was “the only health facility in the area, and served a permanent population of 100,000 as well as 10,000 seasonal nomads.”<sup>35</sup> By 2012, there were no NGOs providing humanitarian assistance inside Jebel Marra, with the exception of some very limited assistance in the government-controlled towns on the plains surrounding the area. Residents of Jebel Marra were required to make long and risky journeys, which often involved crossing a front line, in order to access basic health services. As a result, many, if not most, residents live beyond the purview of the state and have received no modern medical treatment in several years. By 2016, the humanitarian community had not been able to make any reliable humanitarian assessment in Darfur for over half a decade. In December 2015, Tearfund, one of the very few remaining INGOs working on the outskirts of Jebel Marra, was expelled from the country.<sup>36</sup> In May 2016, the most senior UN humanitarian official in the country, who had spoken out about the humanitarian situation in Jebel Marra, was de facto expelled.<sup>37</sup>

In July 2004, several hundred African Union (AU) ceasefire monitors arrived in Darfur; by 2006 their number had grown to 7,000, with an expanded mandate that included civilian protection. In July 2007, the UN Security Council authorized the hybrid African Union/United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).<sup>38</sup> Approximately 21,000 UNAMID peacekeepers and civilian staff are currently present in Darfur.<sup>39</sup> UNAMID’s primary mandate includes the protection of civilians (POC), through the use of force if necessary, and it is empowered to investigate and publicly report on serious abuses of human rights.<sup>40</sup> Despite repeated calls by the Sudan government for the mission to withdraw from Darfur, in June 2016 the UN Security Council unanimously renewed the mission’s mandate for another year.<sup>41</sup>

UNAMID’s mandate and the February 2008 Status of Forces agreement between UNAMID and the government of Sudan give peacekeepers, on paper, unfettered access throughout Darfur; however, the government habitually prevents the mission from accessing conflict-affected areas where protection is urgently needed, including inside Jebel Marra.<sup>42</sup> The lack of access is arguably the most significant

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<sup>29</sup>Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, “Statement to the United Nations Security Council on the Situation in Darfur, pursuant to UNSCR 1593 (2005),” 12 December 2014, available at <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=stmt-OTP-20th-report>.

<sup>30</sup>Jonathan Loeb, “Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Non-State Actors in Darfur, Sudan, 2003- 2012,” Overseas Development Institute, August 2012, [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publicationsopinion-files/8590.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publicationsopinion-files/8590.pdf).

<sup>31</sup>Julie Flint and Alex De Waal, *Darfur: A New History of a Long War*, New York, Zed Books, 2008.

<sup>32</sup>Jonathan Loeb, “Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Non-State Actors in Darfur, Sudan, 2003- 2012,” Overseas Development Institute, August 2012, [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publicationsopinion-files/8590.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publicationsopinion-files/8590.pdf).

<sup>33</sup>Jonathan Loeb, “Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Non-State Actors in Darfur, Sudan, 2003-2012,” Overseas Development Institute, August 2012, [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8590.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8590.pdf)

<sup>34</sup>Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group, “Where to Now? Agency Expulsions in Sudan: Consequences and Next Steps,” 2009, available at [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/4190.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/4190.pdf)

<sup>35</sup>Medecine Sans Frontiers, “Somebody help: The forgotten population of Jebel Si in North Darfur is left without healthcare as MSF struggles to continue its medical activities in the region,” February 2012, available at [www.msf.org.uk/sites/uk/files/Somebody\\_Help\\_ENG\\_May2012\\_201205235001.pdf](http://www.msf.org.uk/sites/uk/files/Somebody_Help_ENG_May2012_201205235001.pdf)

<sup>36</sup>Tearfund, “Latest statement: our work in Sudan,” 13 January 2016, available at [www.tearfund.org/en/media/press\\_releases/latest\\_statement\\_our\\_work\\_in\\_sudan/](http://www.tearfund.org/en/media/press_releases/latest_statement_our_work_in_sudan/)

<sup>37</sup>“Sudan expels two UN officials,” December 25, 2014, Reuters, available at [www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/25/us-sudan/unexpulsions/idUSKBN0K20IC20141225](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/25/us-sudan/unexpulsions/idUSKBN0K20IC20141225); “Sudan asks UN to shut human rights office Khartoum over abuse claims,” The Guardian, November 27, 2014, available at [www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/27/sudan-un-khartoum-abuse-claims](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/27/sudan-un-khartoum-abuse-claims)

<sup>38</sup>UN Security Council Resolution, 31 July 2007, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1769\(2007\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1769(2007)).

<sup>39</sup>UNAMID website, “UNAMID Facts and Figures,” August 2016, available at [unamid.unmissions.org/unamid-facts-and-figures](http://unamid.unmissions.org/unamid-facts-and-figures).

<sup>40</sup>UN Security Resolution 2296, 29 June 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2296\(2016\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2296(2016)).

<sup>41</sup>UN Security Resolution 2296, 29 June 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2296\(2016\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2296(2016)).

<sup>42</sup>Government of Sudan and UNAMID Status of Forces Agreement, February 2008, [unamid.unmissions.org/government-sudan-and-unamid-sign-status-forces-agreement](http://unamid.unmissions.org/government-sudan-and-unamid-sign-status-forces-agreement) [unamid.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMID/UNAMID%20SOFA.pdf](http://unamid.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMID/UNAMID%20SOFA.pdf); Jonathan Loeb, “Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Non-State Actors in Darfur, Sudan, 2003-2012,” Overseas Development Institute, August 2012, [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8590.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8590.pdf)

contributing factor to the mission's repeated failures to protect civilians and investigate reports of serious abuses of human rights.<sup>43</sup>

In 2003, peace negotiations between armed opposition groups and the government of Sudan began in Chad.<sup>44</sup> A peace process has technically been ongoing ever since. UNAMID is mandated to support the peace process.<sup>45</sup> Peace agreements endorsed by the United Nations and the African Union were signed by the government and different armed opposition groups in 2006 and 2011.<sup>46</sup> Neither agreement has improved the security situation in Darfur.

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<sup>43</sup>For documentation of some of the access constraints placed on UNAMID see the quarterly reports of the UN Secretary General to the UN Security Council, available at [www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/](http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/)

<sup>44</sup>"Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement on the Conflict in Darfur," 8 April 2004, available at [peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SD\\_040408\\_Humanitarian%20Ceasefire%20Agreement%20on%20the%20Conflict%20in%20Darfur.pdf](http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SD_040408_Humanitarian%20Ceasefire%20Agreement%20on%20the%20Conflict%20in%20Darfur.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> UN Security Council Resolution, 31 July 2007, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1769\(2007\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1769(2007)).

<sup>46</sup> Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006 (DPA; Abuja Agreement), May 2006, [www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/pace/Sud%2020050505.pdf](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/pace/Sud%2020050505.pdf); 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD; Doha Agreement), May 2011, [unamid.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMID/DDPD%20English.pdf](http://unamid.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMID/DDPD%20English.pdf)

# 4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ANALYSIS

## 4.1 WAR CRIMES

Sudanese government forces that participated in attacks in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016 committed numerous violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL), including unlawful killing, indiscriminate aerial bombing, forced displacement, rape, and pillage.

The conflict in Darfur between Sudanese government forces and armed non-state actors is classified as a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) under international law. Parties to NIACs are bound by treaty-based and customary IHL. In particular, they are required to observe both Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions. Article 3 prohibits the inhumane treatment of “[p]ersons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms,” including “violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture.”<sup>47</sup> Additional Protocol II provides more details on protection of civilians not directly participating in hostilities and civilian objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, including the requirements that “[t]he civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts of violence which primary purpose is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited.”<sup>48</sup> Many of the specific rules included in these and other treaties form part of customary international humanitarian law and are thus binding on all parties to the conflict.

Serious violations of IHL are war crimes. The rules of IHL aim to minimize human suffering and ensure protection of civilians and those who are not directly participating in hostilities. The principle of distinction, a cardinal rule of IHL, requires that parties at all times distinguish between combatants and legitimate military objects on the one hand, and civilians and civilian objects on the other hand, and ensure they direct attacks only at the former. Intentionally directing attacks against civilians who are not directly participating in hostilities and civilian objects is prohibited under international humanitarian law and is a war crime. Harm to the civilian population is permitted only if it is a military necessity and the expected gain of attack is proportionate to the harm caused.<sup>49</sup>

IHL prohibits the destruction or seizure of the property of an adversary, unless required by imperative military necessity.<sup>50</sup> Violating this prohibition constitutes a war crime.<sup>51</sup> Punitive destruction of homes on the basis of suspected political affiliation or on grounds of ethnicity or other discriminatory grounds as documented in this report also violates the prohibition of collective punishment.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Sudan became a party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in September 1957 and a party to Protocol II in July 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), available at [www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b37f40.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b37f40.html).

<sup>49</sup> For an overview of the principle of military necessity see G.D. Solis, *The Law of Armed Conflict: International Humanitarian Law in War*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2016, chapter 13.

<sup>50</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, 2005, Volume I: Rules, rule 50, available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html).

<sup>51</sup> Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 8(2)(e)(xii).

<sup>52</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, 2005, Volume I: Rules, rule 103, available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html)

IHL prohibits the displacement of civilians during non-international armed conflicts except for their own security or for imperative military reasons.<sup>53</sup> When displacement occurs, IHL requires that all possible measures are to be taken to ensure that displaced civilians receive adequate shelter, enjoy satisfactory hygiene, health, safety and nutrition, and that families are not separated.<sup>54</sup>

Prohibitions against rape and sexual violence are recognized as customary international humanitarian law applicable during international and non-international armed conflicts.<sup>55</sup> Rape and sexual violence is a war crime, and where the contextual elements are present, a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).<sup>56</sup> Rape also meets the threshold for torture under international law.<sup>57</sup>

The instances of indiscriminate attacks and direct targeting of civilians documented in this report are clear violations of the cardinal rule of distinction and amount to war crimes.

Government forces shot and killed civilians who were running away as well as unarmed and vulnerable civilians, including women, children and the elderly.

Government forces dropped bombs out of the backs of Antonov cargo planes, a method of attack that is, by its very nature indiscriminate. Many civilians were killed by these bombs in areas where no members of armed opposition groups were present. Even where armed opposition forces were present in areas during attacks, government forces had an obligation to distinguish between combatants and civilians and between military and civilian objects, which they repeatedly failed to do.

The rape and sexual violence against women and girls by government forces and allied militias documented in this report amount to war crimes.

## 4.2 CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Chemical weapons are illegal under treaty-based and customary IHL.<sup>58</sup> Their use is forbidden in accordance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of Poisonous Gases and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare and the 1993 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC).<sup>59</sup>

Article I of the CWC states that the parties to the Convention agree “never under any circumstances: (a) To develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to anyone; (b) To use chemical weapons[.]”

The government of Sudan is a signatory to the CWC.<sup>60</sup>

Evidence strongly suggests that Sudanese government forces repeatedly used chemical weapons during attacks in Jebel Marra. Amnesty International interviewed 52 residents of Jebel Marra, who alleged that Sudanese government forces utilized “poisonous smoke” during attacks in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016. These 52 individuals, all of whom are either survivors of the alleged attacks or cared for survivors, provided Amnesty International with substantial testimonial and photographic evidence in

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<sup>53</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, 2005, Volume I: Rules, rule 129, available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html); see also *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (last amended 2010)*, 17 July 1998, Article 8(2)(e)(viii) (characterizing unjustified forced displacement of civilians as a war crime), available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html)

<sup>54</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, 2005, Volume I: Rules, rule 133, available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html)

<sup>55</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, 2005, Volume I: Rules, available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html), rule 93; ICRC Customary International Law Study, rule 94 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, 2005, Volume I: Rules, available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5305e3de4.html), rule 99.

<sup>56</sup> *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (last amended 2010)*, 17 July 1998, ISBN No. 92-9227-227-6, available at: [www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html), art. 8(2)(e)(vi) (1-6).

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g. Stanišić and Župljanin ICTY Trial Judgment, 2013, para. 48; Delalic, ICTY Trial Judgment, para. 495; Akayesu, ICTR Trial Judgment, para. 682. In Kunarac, the ICTY found “sexual violence necessarily gives rise to severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, and in this way justifies its characterisation as an act of torture.” Kunarac, ICTY Appeals Judgment, para. 150. The tribunal also determined that the forced observer of rape of an acquaintance could be torture. Furundžija, ICTY Trial Judgment, 1998, para. 267.

<sup>58</sup> For an overview of the principle of military necessity see G.D. Solis, *The Law of Armed Conflict: International Humanitarian Law in War*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2016, chapter 20.

<sup>59</sup> Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, “Convention on the prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction,” 13 January 1993, available at [https://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/CWC/CWC\\_en.pdf](https://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/CWC/CWC_en.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> Sudan acceded to the CWC in 1999, and become party to the treaty, available at [atdisarmament.un.org/treaties/t/1925](http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/1925)

support of the allegations. Two chemical weapons experts found that there was credible evidence to strongly suggest that chemical weapons agents were used in the attacks documented in this report.

The chemical weapons use documented in this report amounts to war crimes.

## 4.3 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

When prohibited acts, including murder and forcible transfer of the population, are committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population that is part of a government or organizational policy, they constitute crimes against humanity.<sup>61</sup>

The attacks against civilians in Jebel Marra, particularly the forced displacement and the unlawful killings, were widespread as well as systematic and appear to have been carried out as part of a government policy and may therefore constitute crimes against humanity.

The attacks on Jebel Marra were led by local military and government officials and involved government soldiers as well as allied militias fighting alongside regular forces. The attacks were carried out by thousands of soldiers, took place regularly over the course of several months, and adversely affected the security of hundreds of thousands of residents in the attacked areas.

The vast majority of the attacks followed a pattern. The attacks consistently began with aerial bombardment followed by the arrival of ground forces. The ground forces included uniformed soldiers riding in trucks and pick-up trucks and both uniformed and plain-clothes fighters riding camels, horses, and motorbikes. The soldiers would attack the village, kill civilians, and forcibly displace the population. Unlawful killings by government forces of civilians trying to flee the attacks were reported in nearly every attack where residents were found in the village.

In July 2016, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that as many as 251,000 residents had been displaced by attacks by government forces in Jebel Marra since January.<sup>62</sup> There is substantial evidence suggesting that the government's counter insurgency campaign was designed specifically to forcibly displace this population. Government forces attacked hundreds of villages throughout Jebel Marra. At least 171 of these villages were destroyed or damaged; scores of others were reportedly attacked and looted. Many villages were torched days after civilians had left, indicating an intention on the part of the government to prevent residents from being able to return.

The attacks on the villages appeared to have been carried out not only to force the residents from their homes but also to subsequently deprive the population of shelter, food, and other resources and infrastructure necessary for sustaining life. The attacks on civilian property included the burning of civilian homes, the demolition of civilian infrastructure such as schools and wells, the plunder of livestock, the destruction of crops, and the looting of household goods, money, farming implements, and foodstuffs. The forced displacement and looting also arguably has an ethnic dimension as it facilitated the transfer of civilian assets, often representing the collective wealth of communities acquired over generations, from the attacked Fur communities to other ethnic groups, whose members are represented within the ranks of the Sudanese military and its allied militias.

Amnesty International documented hundreds of unlawful killings during attacks by government forces. Unarmed civilians, including women and children, were killed by bombs and were shot while fleeing attacks; many others died as a result of thirst, starvation, or cold, often after government forces prevented them from seeking refuge in IDP camps.

Neither the unlawful killings nor the forced displacement were justifiable by military necessity; while members of the SLA/AW were present in relatively large numbers in the large areas of Jebel Marra that were attacked, the overwhelming majority of the attacked villages had no formal armed opposition presence at the time of the attack. Depriving the armed opposition movement of the support, mainly food, which they reportedly obtain from the civilian population is not a valid reason under IHL for attacking civilians.

Many of the bombings took place in population centres and rural areas with no SLA/AW presence or in locations that members of the SLA/AW had abandoned days prior to the attack. Most of the shootings took

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<sup>61</sup> UN General Assembly, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (last amended 2010)*, 17 July 1998, ISBN No. 92-9227-227-6, available at [www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html), article 7.

<sup>62</sup> UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan*, 31 July 2016, available at <http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-31-25-31-july-2016-enar>

place in broad daylight; the fleeing population would have been easily identifiable as civilians. Many of the villages were looted and torched after all residents had fled.

In the few cases Amnesty International documented in which armed opposition group fighters were present in areas under attack, which also had civilian populations, government forces did not limit the attack to these fighters but rather implemented a strategy of targeting the civilian population as a whole.

## 4.4 OBLIGATION TO INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE

Amnesty International has concluded that targeted attacks against civilians were pervasive throughout the government's counterinsurgency campaign in Jebel Marra. All of these violations of international law were perpetrated with the apparent explicit or implicit approval of senior military commanders.

Sudan is required under international law to conduct prompt, independent and effective investigations into serious allegations of violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law such as the acts described in this report. Individuals who commit or order war crimes or crimes against humanity bear individual criminal responsibility. Military commanders and civilian superiors may also be responsible for the acts of their subordinates if they are aware of the crimes, or should have been aware of them, and fail to prevent, end or punish them. Those suspected of criminal responsibility must be prosecuted in proceedings that meet international fair trial standards. Sudan must provide fair and adequate reparations to victims.

Witnesses and victims told Amnesty International that the attacks on villages in Jebel Marra were perpetrated by government soldiers and allied militias known as Janjaweed. In numerous instances, witnesses told Amnesty International the assailants' names or the names of the officials in charge.

Since 2003, Sudan has failed to demonstrate the will or the capacity to carry out independent and effective investigations into conflict-related crimes.

In addition, all states, in keeping with their obligations under the principle of universal jurisdiction, should investigate and, where enough admissible evidence is gathered, prosecute crimes under international law committed in Sudan.<sup>63</sup>

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court is empowered by the UN Security Council to investigate the alleged conflict-related crimes that have occurred in Darfur.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> See for example ICJ, Arrest Warrant of 11 April 2000 (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Belgium), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2002, p. 3, where the majority of the court confirmed the right of all states to exercise universal jurisdiction. Amnesty, Universal jurisdiction: The duty of states to enact and implement legislation, (Index: IOR 53/003/2001), September 2001.

<sup>64</sup> UN Security Council, Resolution 1593, 2005, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1593\(2005\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1593(2005)).

# 5. ATTACKS IN JEBEL MARRA, JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 2016

## 5.1.1 COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN

In late 2015, Sudanese government forces began positioning themselves in strategic areas surrounding Jebel Marra.<sup>65</sup> Clashes were reported between government forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) in several locations in Jebel Marra in December 2015 and early January 2016.<sup>66</sup> Government forces launched a large-scale military campaign in Jebel Marra in mid-January 2016.<sup>67</sup> Coordinated ground and air attacks targeted locations throughout Jebel Marra until May, when the seasonal rains in Darfur intensified, making ground attacks impractical throughout most of the area; air operations and small-scale attacks continued through mid-September.

The military campaign's objective was to attack and gain control over positions held by members of the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW). Prior to the government offensive, the government had accused the SLA/AW of ambushing military convoys, hijacking commercial vehicles, and attacking civilians.<sup>68</sup>

The government's military operations were concentrated in four areas: in northern Jebel Marra, west of Sortoni, around Row Fottah, around Rokero, and around Kaguro; in western Jebel Marra, west of Nertiti, south of Juldo, and around Golol; in central Jebel Marra, around Golo and around Sorrong; and in southern Jebel Marra, around Kurulan-Banj, Tourong-Taora, and Feina.

Hundreds of villages were attacked.

The government forces included members of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), as well as militia referred to by the local population as Janjaweed. Regular and militia forces fought in concert throughout the campaign.

The only available estimates of the size of the government force come from observations by UN staff who observed forces advancing towards Jebel Marra, members of the SLA/AW, or residents of Jebel Marra. On 15 January, immediately prior to the start of large-scale ground operations in western Jebel Marra, UN sources reported approximately 9,000 combatants mobilizing in an area called Khor Ramla, 8km west of the

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<sup>65</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 22 March 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268), p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 22 March 2016, available at p. 2; Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW commander in April; Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW commander in May.

<sup>67</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 22 March 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268), p. 1; "Fresh clashes erupt in C. Darfur between Sudan army, rebels," *Sudan Tribune*, 17 January 2014, available at [www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article57708](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article57708)

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 22 March 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268), p. 1.

UNAMID's base in Nertiti, on the western edge of Jebel Marra.<sup>69</sup> Around the same time, members of SLA/AW also reported seeing large numbers of government forces assembled in Khor Ramla; armed opposition group commanders estimated the total number of government vehicles at 600-700.<sup>70</sup>

The government armies assembled in western Jebel Marra in mid-January likely reflect only part of the government's total forces as large-scale operations were launched simultaneously from multiple locations throughout Jebel Marra in mid-January.

The vast majority of the attacks on villages involved land forces, often with air support; a minority of the attacks were entirely air attacks.

The government's air forces reportedly included Antonov cargo planes used as bombers, jets, and helicopters; ground forces used modified pick-up trucks, motorbikes, camels, horses and tanks.<sup>71</sup>

The size of the SLA/AW forces is also unclear. According to accounts given by SLA/AW commanders, the total number of armed combatants inside Jebel Marra is somewhere between several hundred and a few thousand. SLA/AW has very few vehicles; most of their operations are carried out on foot. Its weapons are largely limited to rifles and machine guns.<sup>72</sup>

Both the amount of territory controlled by SLA/AW in Jebel Marra and the degree of control that actually existed inside these territories is contested. Prior to the start of the military operations in January, the Government of Sudan had a permanent military presence inside most major towns in and around Jebel Marra, including Golo, Juldo, Rokero, Deribat, Nertiti, Thur, and Fanga. The military installations gave government forces de facto control over most of the strategic transportation routes into Jebel Marra.

Despite a lack of presence in Jebel Marra's major towns, SLA/AW forces maintained a presence throughout most of the more rural areas in Jebel Marra, significant portions of which had seen a complete absence of government presence since the beginning of the conflict.

The extent of SLA/AW presence inside areas that it ostensibly controlled varied considerably and was often limited; SLA/AW had approximately a dozen bases scattered throughout the mountains.<sup>73</sup> SLA members regularly travelled into towns and villages to visit relatives, acquire food supplies, and tax members of the population;<sup>74</sup> however, SLA performed virtually none of the administrative services normally carried out by government bodies, some of which continued to be carried out by traditional rulers.<sup>75</sup>

Many of the small villages in Jebel Marra had experienced no government and no sustained armed opposition group presence in years.

Government forces fought with the SLA/AW on numerous occasions throughout the campaign, dislodging them from strategic positions in each of the four areas of major violence. By May 2016, the SLA/AW had lost significant territory in each of the four areas. SLA/AW is now confined to areas much deeper inside Jebel Marra.<sup>76</sup>

Government forces have established a military presence in several villages in areas that were previously under SLA/AW control including Kutrum and Boldong in western Jebel Marra, Kaguro and Row Fottah in northern Jebel Marra, Koron and Sorrong in central Jebel Marra, and in Tourong-Taora and Kalukidding in southern Jebel Marra.

In April 2016, shortly before defeating SLA/AW forces in the areas around Sorrong, President al-Bashir declared that Darfur would be free of rebellion before the end of the month.<sup>77</sup> In July, the government

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<sup>69</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>70</sup> Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW commander in May; Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW commander in July.

<sup>71</sup> Antonov aircraft are traditionally cargo planes; however, they have been used to as bombers throughout the Darfur conflict; the Russian Federation, China, Belarus and Ukraine have continued to export arms to the Sudanese government despite long-standing concerns about their re-transfer by the Sudanese government to parts of Sudan under UN Security Council arms embargo, and their use in serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law; for an overview of the failure of the UN arms embargo in Darfur see "Broken promises The arms embargo on Darfur since 2012", *Small Arms Survey*, available at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB24-Darfur-Embargo.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB24-Darfur-Embargo.pdf) and the reports of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, available at [www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1591/panel-of-experts/reports](http://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1591/panel-of-experts/reports).

<sup>72</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW soldiers and commanders in March – August 2016.

<sup>73</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW soldiers and commanders in March – August 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Amnesty International interviews with civilian residents of Jebel Marra and with SLA/AW soldiers and commanders in March – August 2016.

<sup>75</sup> For the role of traditional leaders in Jebel Marra and other areas in Darfur see J. Tubiana, V. Tanner, M. A. Abdul-Jalil, "Traditional Authorities Peacemaking Role in Darfur," *United States Institute for Peace*, 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW soldiers and commanders in March – August 2016.

<sup>77</sup> "Darfur will be free of rebellion within weeks, says Sudan's Bashir," *The National*, 7 April 2016, available at [www.thenational.ae/world/africa/darfur-will-be-free-of-rebellion-within-weeks-sudans-bashir](http://www.thenational.ae/world/africa/darfur-will-be-free-of-rebellion-within-weeks-sudans-bashir); "Sudanese army seizes last rebel stronghold in Jebel Marra," *Sudan Tribune*, 12 April 2016.

declared a ceasefire.<sup>78</sup> On 7 September 2016, President al-Bashir celebrated the end of the war in Darfur in El-Fasher.<sup>79</sup>

SLA/AW recognize that they have been defeated in several areas but reject the government's claims that it is in control of the entire area or that it has defeated the movement. SLA/AW Chairman Abdul Wahid Mohammed Ahmed Alnour acknowledges that the SLA/AW "lost a lot of villages under [its] control"; however, he maintains that the government offensive did not significantly impact the SLA/AW's military capabilities. "[The government forces] never reached our strategic weapons stores... The SLA never lost a lot of troops. Unfortunately, the casualties came from civilians and their property", he said.<sup>80</sup> Several SLA/AW commanders, who acknowledge both a responsibility towards civilians and reliance upon the local population for support, admit that the loss of territory represents a significant loss to the movement.<sup>81</sup>

In mid-September 2016, small-scale fighting between the government and the SLA, including aerial bombardments by the government, was still ongoing in at least three of the four regions that had come under attack.

## 5.1.2 ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIANS

Amnesty International has documented scores of instances where government forces deliberately targeted civilians and civilian property.

Amnesty International interviewed 184 survivors and witnesses who reported abuses carried out by government forces in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016. Using the testimony from these survivors and witnesses, as well as satellite imagery, still photographs, UN reports, and reports by local human rights monitors, Amnesty International has documented a large number of serious violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law committed by Sudanese government forces against the civilian population and civilian property.

The violations included the indiscriminate bombing of civilians and civilian property, the unlawful killing of men, women, and children, the abduction and rape of women, the forced displacement of civilians, and the looting and destruction of civilian property, including the destruction of entire villages.

The vast majority of the abuses documented in this report took place in areas where, prior to the attacks, there was no permanent government presence and that were considered to be under SLA/AW control. However, Amnesty International has also documented violations by government forces, including killings, rape, and looting, inside towns under government control, including Juldo, Thur, Nertiti, and Golo.

Many survivors identified the names of people who were killed in the attacks. Survivors and local human rights monitors provided Amnesty International with the names of 367 civilians, including 95 children, who were killed in Jebel Marra by government forces between January and June 2016. Most civilians were killed by bombs or shot while fleeing attacks. Government forces also killed civilians who resisted the forces' violations, including those who resisted giving up their property or tried to prevent rapes.

Amnesty International spoke with 4 survivors of rape, 10 witnesses of rape, and received numerous second hand accounts of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women. Human rights monitors also provided Amnesty International with numerous accounts of rape, which they had documented. Women were consistently raped during and after attacks, including after arriving in government controlled towns.

Survivors and local human rights monitors provided Amnesty International with the names hundreds of villages in Jebel Marra that were attacked by government forces between January and July 2016.

Using satellite imagery, Amnesty International was able to confirm that 171 villages were destroyed or damaged.

While members of the SLA/AW were present in relatively large numbers in the large areas of Jebel Marra that attacked, the overwhelming majority of the attacked villages had no formal armed opposition presence at the time of the attacks. The purpose of these attacks appears to have been to target the entire population of the village.

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<sup>78</sup> "USA welcomes govt.'s ceasefire in Darfur," *Radio Dabanga*, available at [www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/usa-welcomes-govt-s-ceasefire-in-darfur](http://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/usa-welcomes-govt-s-ceasefire-in-darfur)

<sup>79</sup> "Sudan's Bashir claims peace returning to Darfur," *AFP*, available at [www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-377758/Sudan-set-declare-end-Darfur-conflict.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-377758/Sudan-set-declare-end-Darfur-conflict.html)

<sup>80</sup> Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW Chairman Abdul Wahid Mohammed Ahmed Alnour.

<sup>81</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW soldiers and commanders in March – August 2016.

Numerous villages were attacked multiple times, including many that were torched after they had been abandoned by the local residents.

Nearly all survivors interviewed by Amnesty International stated that the attacks by government forces involved the looting and destruction of civilian property. The attacks on civilian property included the burning of civilian homes, the demolition of civilian infrastructure such as schools and wells, the plunder of livestock, the destruction of crops, and the looting of household goods, money, farming implements, and foodstuffs. This deprivation of shelter, food, and other resources and infrastructure necessary for sustaining life appeared to be part of a government plan to force civilians from their homes, deprive them of all of their assets, and render them unable to sustain independent livelihoods. It also facilitated the transfer of civilian assets, often representing the collective wealth of communities acquired over generations, from the attacked Fur communities to other ethnic groups, whose members are represented within the ranks of the Sudanese military and its allied militias.

Survivors were confronted with looting and destruction in a variety of different ways: some had their property looted or destroyed in front of them; some witnessed looting and destruction while fleeing the attacks; some watched destruction while hiding from attackers during attacks; some observed evidence of looting and destruction in neighbouring villages; some saw evidence of looting and destruction when they returned to their village after an attack in order to bury the dead, look for survivors, gather food, or because they (often wrongly) believed that the threat of violence had subsided.

Many survivors reported that they were forced to flee from the attacks with few or no material possessions, often without food, water, or shoes; several of those who had been able to flee with some of their belongings reported that these were subsequently looted by armed men who found them while they were hiding or who they met on the road while they were attempting to get to IDP camps.

As a result of access restrictions, no humanitarian actor has been permitted to carry out any credible humanitarian assessment of the areas affected by conflict in Jebel Marra in 2016. At the end of July 2016, the UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that a quarter of a million people may have been displaced by violence in Jebel Marra:

**“During the first seven months of 2016, close to 81,000 people were newly displaced across Darfur according to the UN and partners. Up to an additional 170,000 people were also reportedly displaced, of whom 50,000 have reportedly returned, but the UN and Humanitarian partners are unable to verify these figures due to a lack of access to the relevant locations... efforts are ongoing to access areas reportedly hosting IDPs from Jebel Marra in South and Central Darfur in order to identify the number and needs of displaced persons. Although the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in Central Darfur reported that IDPs in North Darfur originating from Jebel Marra have started returning, no clear movements from North Darfur have been observed as yet.”<sup>82</sup>**

Many of the survivors have fled to the UNAMID base in Sortoni, on the edge of northern Jebel Marra, which has become a de-facto Protection of Civilians (POC) site; many have fled to towns and IDP camps inside government-controlled towns in the plains surrounding Jebel Marra, including Tawila, Kebkabiya, Nertiti, Kass, Juldo, Thur, Shangil Tobay, and Mershing.<sup>83</sup> In many instances, survivors report that the government has refused to allow them to register as IDPs. Many survivors, particularly women, who fled to IDP camps describe a very perilous security environment in and around the camps. Many survivors have reportedly fled to areas inside Jebel Marra, outside of government controlled areas, where they remain vulnerable to further attacks.<sup>84</sup>

In September, OCHA reported that humanitarian actors had been able to register, verify, or assist only 82,000 individuals displaced from Jebel Marra.<sup>85</sup> OCHA further reported that:

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<sup>82</sup> UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan*, 31 July 2016, available at <http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-bulletin-31-25-31-july-2016-enar>

<sup>83</sup> UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Jebel Marra Crisis: Fact Sheet*, Issue 7, 1 September 2016, available at <http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/jebel-marra-crisis-fact-sheet-issue-7-i-1-september-2016>

<sup>84</sup> UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Jebel Marra Crisis: Fact Sheet*, Issue 7, 1 September 2016, available at <http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/jebel-marra-crisis-fact-sheet-issue-7-i-1-september-2016>

<sup>85</sup> UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Jebel Marra Crisis: Fact Sheet*, Issue 7, 1 September 2016, available at <http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/jebel-marra-crisis-fact-sheet-issue-7-i-1-september-2016>

**“Humanitarian actors have been unable to assess and respond fully to the needs of an estimated 50,000—85,000 people in different parts of Jebel Marra who have been reportedly displaced as a result of hostilities. The UN is extremely concerned about the plight of these civilians who are in need of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian partners continue significant engagement with government actors to advocate for access to assess needs and assist people in areas where**



People displaced by violence in northern Jebel Marra in January and February gather around the UNAMID base in Sortoni, north Darfur, 2016. ©Amnesty International

**access has not been possible for at least four years, including inner Jebel Marra and particularly Golo, Central Darfur, where an inter-agency and UN-African [Union] Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) scoping mission together with the Government took place in early August.”**

There are no formal health facilities outside of the major government controlled towns in Jebel Marra. NGOs were expelled years ago and multiple residents of Jebel Marra told Amnesty International that government officials often prevent even small shipments of medicine from entering the area. As a result, survivors in the mountains have absolutely no access to urgently needed humanitarian assistance, especially health care.

### **5.1.3 UNAMID AND THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN JEBEL MARRA**

UNAMID has not been permitted to have any meaningful access to the conflict-affected areas inside Jebel Marra. The March 2016 Secretary General’s report to the UN Security Council on the situation in Darfur stated:

**“Restrictions of movement and denials of access and clearances continued to be imposed on UNAMID by Military Intelligence or the National Intelligence and Security Services. As a result, UNAMID could not undertake critical security and assessment missions in areas of active fighting or intercommunal violence, such as ... Jebel Marra area.”<sup>86</sup>**

The July 2016 Secretary General’s report to the UN Security Council on the situation in Darfur stated:

**“Inter-agency and/or other independent needs assessments relating to displacement in the Jebel Marra have not been permitted by the Government in a number of areas of reported displacement, in particular Central Darfur.”<sup>87</sup>**

<sup>86</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 22 March 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268), p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 1 July 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587).

As a result, UNAMID has been unable to provide protection for any civilians in Jebel Marra from attacks in Jebel Marra, unless the civilians managed to get themselves to the UNAMID base in Sortoni or to other UNAMID-protected internally displaced person camps outside of Jebel Marra. Moreover, all UNAMID reporting about the human rights situations in Jebel Marra is either second-hand or based on observations made from outside of Jebel Marra.



## 5.2 WESTERN JEBEL MARRA

### 5.2.1 SUMMARY OF ATTACKS

Between late December 2015 and May 2016, Sudanese government forces carried out co-ordinated air and land attacks in western Jebel Marra.<sup>88</sup> Aerial bombardment has continued through September. The attacks took place in the areas east of Nertiti, around Golol, and south of Juldo.

Prior to the attack, government troops were stationed in Nertiti and in Juldo; they had little to no presence outside of these two towns.

SLA/AW maintained a significant presence in western Jebel Marra prior to the attack; however, the total number of armed opposition group fighters present in area is estimated at a few hundred.<sup>89</sup>

According to accounts from civilians and members of the SLA/AW, the SAF and SLA/AW engaged in firefights on and off for about a week starting on or around 8 January 2016. On or around 13 January the majority of the SAF forces briefly left the area.<sup>90</sup> On 14 January, both SLA/AW and UN sources assert that thousands of government fighters on hundreds of military vehicles gathered a few kilometres west of Nertiti, in an area called Khor Ramla, which is along the road between Nertiti and Zalingei.<sup>91</sup>

On the night of 15 January, the SAF commenced a bombing campaign in western Jebel Marra, which targeted civilian population centres.<sup>92</sup> On the morning of 16 January, government forces commenced large-scale land operations. UN sources observed a large number of forces on horses, motorbikes and vehicles moving towards the areas east of UNAMID's Nertiti base.<sup>93</sup>

Shortly after the ground offensive began, government forces engaged in firefights with SLA/AW fighters in different areas east of Nertiti. After the SLA/AW retreated, government forces attacked a large number of villages in the area. The vast majority of the villages were undefended.

According to civilians and members of the SLA/AW interviewed by Amnesty, between 15 and 23 January, SLA/AW was present and often fought against government forces in the areas outside villages; according to the survivors, there was no organized SLA/AW presence inside villages at the time of the attacks.

Most of the attacks in western Jebel Marra took place in January during the two weeks after the fighting began; however, soldiers and allied militias have remained in the region since January. Villages were attacked by land forces through June and by aerial bombardment through September; many villages have been attacked multiple times, and many were destroyed after the civilian population had fled.

According to witnesses, government soldiers remaining in the areas have based themselves in Boldong and Kutrum villages.<sup>94</sup> Satellite imagery analysed by Amnesty International detected a significant number of new structures present in the precise locations that witnesses report seeing new government bases.<sup>95</sup> Witnesses saw tanks in both locations.

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<sup>88</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 22 March 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268); United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 1 July 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587)

<sup>89</sup> Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW commander in June 2016.

<sup>90</sup> Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW commander in June 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>92</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>93</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>94</sup> Amnesty International interview with a civilian in May; Amnesty international interview with SLA/AW commander in June 2016.

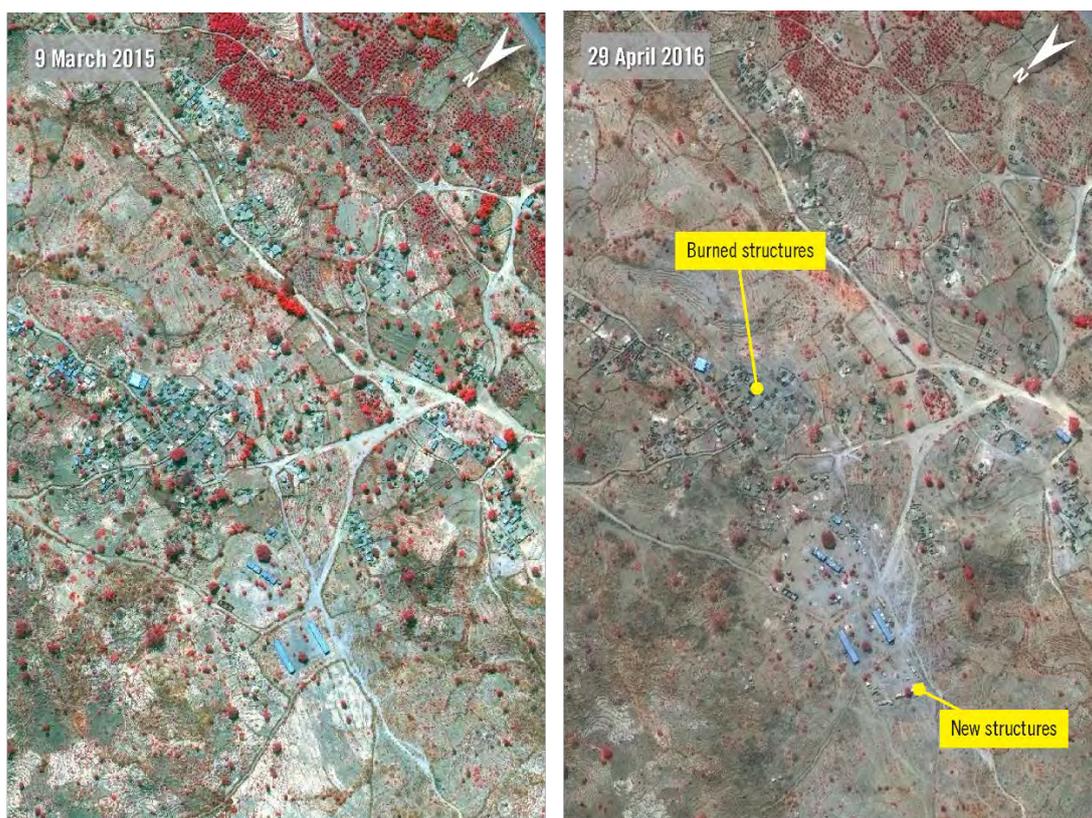
<sup>95</sup> Amnesty International interviews with witnesses in May 2016.



Boldong village, 9 March 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Boldong Village, 29 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Kutrum village, 9 March 2015 and 29 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

Elements from government-allied militia groups, who fought alongside the government during the attacks in western Jebel Marra, are reportedly present throughout the areas, especially around Kutrum; the local population has accused these groups of occupying land and attacking local residents who attempt to return to their land.

Survivors and local human rights monitors provided the names of dozens of villages in western Jebel Marra that were attacked.

Amnesty International has analysed high-resolution satellite imagery covering 75km<sup>2</sup> of land east of Nertiti.<sup>96</sup> Inside that area, 12 villages, Boldong, Darge, Karmal, Katuro, Kenengah, Korgie, Korrow, Kundah, Kutrum, Kwaniju, Lawey, and Tado, were destroyed; six villages, Barbara, Baringo, Boranga, Keirguei, Rarry, and Teiney Soam, were severely damaged.<sup>97</sup> The destroyed or visibly damaged villages make up all the villages in this area except for the very small villages of Swo'ongo and Vidju, which were both also attacked. Kutrum market, the largest market in the area, was also attacked and heavily damaged.

Through the analysis of publicly available satellite imagery, Amnesty International was able to confirm that nine villages in western Jebel Marra, not located inside the abovementioned 75km<sup>2</sup> area, were either destroyed or damaged, including Aei Koreoh Soam, Birja, Derlewa, Kalou, Morrah, Woo Adam-Elley, and Golol.

Numerous other villages, in the areas northwest of Baringo and Barbara, which were not attacked by ground forces, have been subjected to aerial bombardment repeatedly between January and September.

Everyone in the villages that were attacked by land forces was either displaced or killed. Many people had fled to displaced persons camps in Nertiti, Thur, Zalingei, and Juldo. And many others have fled to areas inside Jebel Marra, often living under very precarious humanitarian circumstances, often without adequate food or

<sup>96</sup> To conduct the analysis Amnesty compared imagery from 9 March 2015 and 29 April 2016.

<sup>97</sup> 'Soam' is the Fur word for 'Quranic School'. Some villages in Jebel Marra, which are populated mainly by students at the village village's Quranic school as referred to by the name of the school. For example, Teiney Soam.



A bomb dropped near the village of Golol, 2016.  
©Amnesty International



Destroyed homes in Golol village, 2016.  
©Amnesty International

shelter and almost always without any adequate health services. The vast majority of the population displaced by attacks in western Jebel Marra has reportedly not returned to their villages. Survivors consistently stated that they could not return due to insecurity or because their village had been destroyed or both.

## 5.2.2 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS

Amnesty International interviewed 62 survivors of attacks by government forces in western Jebel Marra. The survivors witnessed attacks in Barbara, Baringo, Boldong, Buri, Karinge, Rarry, Birja, Kadingo, Kutrum, Kenengah, Sworroh, Swo'ongo, Golol, Juldo, Tado, Lawey, Teiney Soam, and Karmal.

Nearly all the survivors had been forced to flee their homes and had lost most, if not all, of their personal belongings. Nearly all were from villages that were destroyed or heavily damaged. Many had experienced severe physical violence. Most could identify civilians from their family or their village who were killed during the attacks. Many reported that government forces had raped women. Many survivors expressed a desire for UNAMID to provide protection in the area so that they could return and work on their farms.

### ATTACKS AROUND KENENGAH

Kenengah, a village 5km east of Nertiti, was one of the first villages to be attacked by government forces on 16 January. Kenengah was attacked several times in January, looted, and ultimately torched.<sup>98</sup>

Amnesty International interviewed seven survivors who were present in Kenengah during the attack on 16 January. All seven survivors stated that the SLA/AW was not present inside the village when the attack started; however, some said that there was fighting between the government forces and the SLA/AW along the road and in hills and fields outside of the town. Hari, a man in his thirties, said that “[t]he rebels fought them all day [outside of the village]. After the SLA/AW was defeated, the government came into the town and started burning the village.”<sup>99</sup>

Kenengah and the surrounding area was bombed by Antonovs prior to the ground attack.

Several survivors told Amnesty International that they were surprised by the ground attack; they described a chaotic scene in which they were forced to run away barefoot and seek refuge in nearby hills and brooks.

Fatimah, in her thirties, and Mariam, in her forties, ran away during the attack and hid together in hills near the village. Fatimah said that when the land attack started a group of villagers “ran away with bare feet, even without clothes for children or food or anything to drink water. We ran into the *wadi* [dry river bed] ... We spent five days there... It was difficult to stay there because it was so cold... Some people died in the brooks from the cold and some people died from bombs.”<sup>100</sup> Mariam provided the names of three women who died. “They died from the cold. So we decided to come [here]”, she said.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Amnesty international interview in May 2016.

<sup>99</sup> Amnesty international interview in May 2016.

<sup>100</sup> Amnesty International interview in March 2016.

<sup>101</sup> Amnesty International interview in March 2016.



A burned hut in Kenengah Village, 2016. ©Amnesty International

Ayesha also fled Kenengah during the attack, hid in a brook for several days, and made her way to a town outside Jebel Marra. Three months after arriving in the town, Ayesha decided to return to Kenengah with her family and some of her neighbours. “I went back because I had some onions that I needed to farm,” she said. “When we arrived [in Kenengah] we saw that the village was completely burned down... we rigged up some shelter [in the fields].” Early the following morning the area where they had set up their shelters came under heavy gunfire. “[I was told] some people were killed but I couldn’t see who they were. It was too dark,” she said.

Ayesha provided the names of five men from Kenengah who were killed during the first attack, either in the village or on the road on the way to the market in Kutrum.<sup>102</sup>

Korrow village, two and a half kilometres east of Kenengah, was also attacked at the beginning of the government offensive in January. Korrow was reportedly attacked multiple times and ultimately torched.

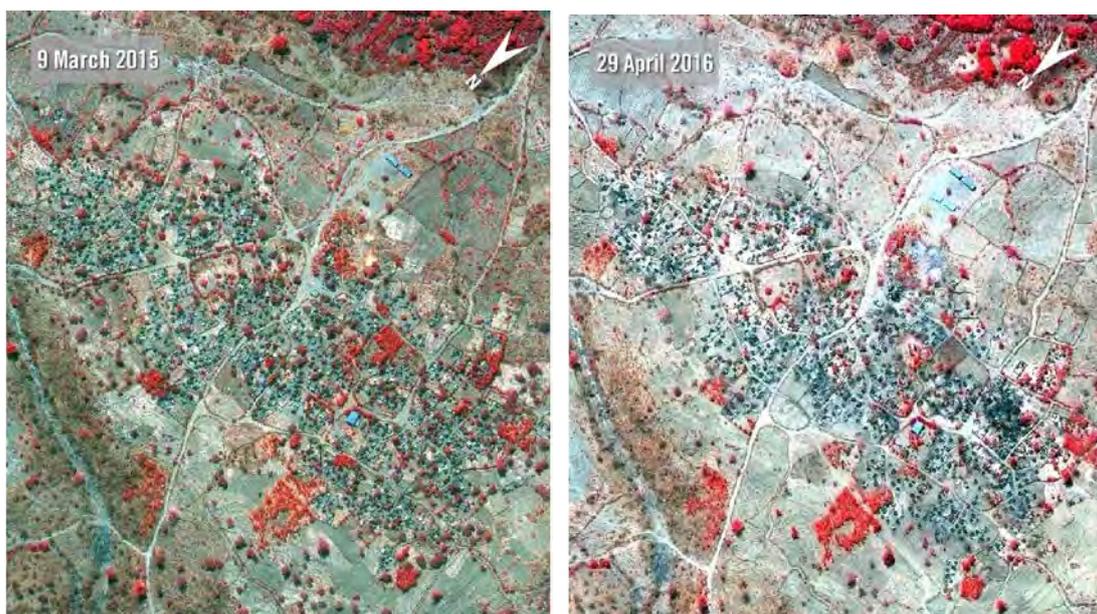
Amnesty International spoke with seven survivors who were present in Korrow at the time of the first attack. All seven stated that the SLA/AW was not present inside the village during the attack; however, a few stated that fighting between the SLA/AW and government had taken place outside the village prior to government forces arriving in the village. Several reported running barefoot from the village and taking shelter in nearby brooks and seasonal waterways called *wadis*; several reported being attacked again while they were hiding.

Hawa, in her teens, witnessed several people being shot while she was fleeing the village:

**“The enemies came and surprised us with an attack... They bombed us and then others came on foot and on trucks and on animals... We ran away without taking anything. We ran to the *wadi*... I saw seven people get shot as I was running away... I saw them get shot and fall down. One of them was my aunt... They died outside the village while they were running to the *wadi*.”**

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<sup>102</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.



Korrow village, 9 March 2015 and 29 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

Hawa was forced to flee again when bombs landed close to the cave that she was hiding in:

**“The bombs forced us away [from the cave] ... We ran to Barbara [a village about 4km northeast of Korrow] ... we found [Barbara] empty and partly burned... then we ran to Tirisor [a village about 3km northeast of Barbara] ... it was empty but it was not destroyed.”**

Hawa fled to several other villages over the course of several weeks before arriving in a displaced persons camp outside of Jebel Marra.<sup>103</sup>

Sanieh, Hawa’s older sister, fled alongside Hawa. Three of her children were injured during the attack and her grandfather and grandmother both died shortly after arriving in the IDP camp. “They starved to death”, she said.<sup>104</sup>

Arbab, in his thirties, was on the outskirts of Korrow during two attacks in January. He fled from the area during both attacks. He helped bury 21 people who were killed during the first attack, and witnessed four other people die from a bomb in the aftermath of the second attack.

**“At the moment [of the first attack] I was on my way to fetch grass with my livestock. I was attacked. The attackers came and took our animals... We ran away and then they continued to attack the village... 17 adults and four children were killed.... Those are the ones that I saw [after they died] ... they were killed while running away from the attack between Korrow and Kenengah. I took part in burying their dead bodies... During the second attack I was on my farm with my orange trees. There were many more people killed. We ran away again... there was a lot of bombing and a lot of men on horses and camels... we ran to the *wadi*... we were chased out... we ran to another *wadi*... we spent one and a half months hiding in the brooks and *wadis*... people from the nearby villages brought us some food so that we could survive... four people were killed while we were hiding the brooks by bombing... Two were Quranic school students who were bringing food to the people who were hiding. They were very close to us when the bomb fell on them.”**

Arbab provided the names of nine of the people that he buried.<sup>105</sup> Braim, in his sixties, also helped bury people who had died in the attack on Korrow. He provided the names of some of the people mentioned by Arbab and twelve other people killed during the attacks.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>104</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>105</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>106</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

Diguiri, in her teens, was on her way from Korrow to Kutrum when the attack started. She took refuge in a nearby Quranic school in the village on Teiney, which was also attacked:

**“I was on my way to the market [in Kutrum] ... The first thing I saw was a plane that bombed a little bit away from the road I walking on ... I ran back to [Korrow] village. I got my child. I ran [away from the village into the hills] to the Teiney Soam [Teiney village] ... Then the attackers arrived in the area and the airplanes bombed inside the school... People from the whole village were hiding in the school. Some children were killed. And one old woman... I was so scared... [After the bomb landed] we ran to Tarmah. Then the attack continued in Tarmah so we ran a little higher [up the mountains] to Koroto Kenya... when they bombed the area of Koroto Kenya we moved again... We continued on at night [for several days] foot until we reach Juldo... In Juldo I washed dishes until I could pay to take a truck to come to [this town].”<sup>107</sup>**

According to Adam, who visited Kenengah on two occasions after the initial attack, Kenengah village was looted before it was torched: “The second time I went to Kenengah I found Janjaweed there with their [families]... Their camels were full of household goods... I saw them taking all types of goods, even roofs.”<sup>108</sup>

### ATTACKS AROUND KUTRUM



Kutrum Market, 9 March 2015 and 29 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

Kutrum, a village 9km northeast of Nertiti with a school and a large market, was attacked on Saturday 16 January. Saturday is market day in Kutrum, and, as a result, many people from surrounding villages were heading to Kutrum to buy and sell goods.

There was no formal SLA/AW presence in the village when the attack started; however, the SLA/AW arrived after the attack began and fought against the government forces in areas outside of the village.

Amnesty International interviewed eight witnesses who were present inside Kutrum or on the outskirts of the village on 16 January, the day it was initially attacked. Each witness described the moments after the attack began as chaotic and terrifying. All the survivors were forced to flee and take refuge in the hills and brooks surrounding the town; many were forced to hide for months, under the constant threat of bombardment and attack, often without adequate food, water, or shelter. Several survivors reported that people were shot and killed during the attack. Witnesses said that 15 babies or very young children died from the cold or starvation while hiding in the bush.

“A disaster fell on us”, said Daouda, a farmer and father of nine, “at that moment [when the attack started], there was no time to see who was being killed. Everyone was trying to save themselves.”<sup>109</sup>

Bahssi, a traditional leader from Kutrum, told Amnesty International that Janjaweed arrived in the village before the government troops.

**“Kutrum itself was not bombed but the airplanes had been bombing since Friday, the day before the attack, in the [neighbouring villages] of Kundah and Kundah and Vidju... Many people were killed in the village. We can't go**

<sup>107</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>108</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>109</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

**back to bury them. [We have been told] that the attackers are still there... We arrived [in this IDP camp] naked and hungry... There was nothing to eat. The people were depending on bush fruits and tree leaves.”<sup>110</sup>**

Maidah, in her teens, was on her way from Kutrum to her farm with her mother and father when she heard planes and rocket fire. Shortly after she heard the rocket fire, a man who was running away from Kutrum told her that the village was being shelled. Maidah decided to leave her parents and return to Kutrum to try to find her younger brothers and sisters who were still inside the village.

**“By the time I got back the attackers were already in the village... There were trucks, horses, and some tanks.... I found some of [my younger brothers and sisters]. I managed to carry two of them. And I told the others who were a little older to run behind me... while I was running I saw three people who had been shot. I came across them [on the road]. They were lying on the ground. They were not yet dead but they were bleeding... Then we ran into the bush. In the bush the attackers fired their guns at us... We hid in the bush. We met my mother four days later in the bush... Then my mother got lost from us and we remained with my aunt... [A few days later, while we were still hiding] my aunt decided to go back to our farm to look for food and a bomb landed on her and she died... After my aunt was killed we ran to another *wadi* and found my grandmother there... When we arrived in that *wadi* another plane came and dropped a bomb that killed two children and broke my grandmother’s leg... We decided to run to Juldo... On our way [to Juldo] we saw Arabs who were taking women. I saw three women being taken. So we decided to run back to the bush... We ran to the village of Kude. While we were running the attackers came and [abducted] six [more] women... We stayed in Kude for a while but the bombing didn’t stop so we decided to go through the forest to Nertiti... On the way to Nertiti I was beaten by the attackers and they tore off my clothes. And they broke the leg of my cousin... Now we are in an [IDP] camp. We are safe in the camp. But you cannot leave the camp. The day before yesterday some women went to get firewood [outside the camp] and three of them were taken and we don’t know where they are.”<sup>111</sup>**

Katwoah, in her thirties, fled from Kutrum into the bush as the attack began:

**“I have eight children. I managed to take some and had to leave the others behind. And my husband has one leg paralyzed. He was not able to come. We left him in the village... I found the rest of my children in the bush four days later. I do not know what happened to my husband ... While we were running out... I came across a man who I knew. He was covered in blood... [My children and I] were in the bush for two months, in the *wadi* near the village of Baringo... In the bush there was nothing to eat. We were suffering. The children were dying... The women who were with me – living under the same tree – we lost five children. We heard that many others died... We decided to come to [this town] ... On the way to [this town] we came across attackers and they raped my sister in front of me. They were soldiers in uniforms. They had their faces wrapped.”<sup>112</sup>**

Biessoh, in his thirties, told Amnesty International that he was beaten during the attack and then fled the village:

**“I spent more than two months looking for places to stay and what to eat... In the bush we lost children. Children died because of hunger and thirst... and it was winter and the cold also affected their health... Fifteen children died in the bush. I participated in burying them... We buried them in different places.”<sup>113</sup>**

Survivors provided the names of ten people who were killed during the attack and reported that 15 children and babies who died during the aftermath of the attack.<sup>114</sup>

Baringo, a group of three small villages 2km northwest of Kutrum, was attacked on the same day as Kutrum. Amnesty International interviewed four witnesses who were present during the attack.

Ushar, in his fifties, told Amnesty International that no SLA/AW members were present in Baringo when the attack started but that they arrived in the area after the fighting started and then retreated. Ushar also provided the name of one man who was killed by a bomb in a brook near Kutrum.<sup>115</sup>

Kubrah, in her twenties, fled Baringo with her family. Her husband and one of her sons were shot and killed as they fled.

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<sup>110</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>111</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>112</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>113</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>114</sup> Amnesty International interview in April 2016.

<sup>115</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

**“When the attackers arrived, my husband and I ran with our kids... We were together and then [my son] fell behind... My husband turned back to get him. And then we saw that [the child] was already shot and bleeding. He went to pick up the boy and [my husband] was also shot [and killed] ... It was outside the village... They killed a lot of people. They saw where people were running and just started shooting... We couldn’t even go back to bury the bodies.”<sup>116</sup>**

Baidei, in her eighties, told Amnesty International that she was in her home when the attack started. “The Janjaweed chased us from our village”, she said. “They opened fire [on our compound] and we ran away... Three people were killed [while running] ... We buried their bodies in the bush... We spent four months hiding in the bush... There were a lot of bombs and people had nothing to eat.”<sup>117</sup>

Assinah, in her thirties, provided the names of two women killed by bombs outside of Baringo. She also said that several children were killed by bombs while they were hiding and that three died of starvation.<sup>118</sup>

Lawei village, 1.5km north of Kutrum; Karmal village, 1km southwest of Lawei; Rarry village, 1.5km northeast of Kutrum; Sworrah village, 3km northeast of Kutrum; and Tado, 3km west of Kutrum, were all also attacked on the same day as Kutrum.

Lawei and Karmal are both home to large Quranic schools that were destroyed during the attacks.

Sambil, in his thirties, was at his shop in Rarry village, 11km northeast of Nertiti, when it was attacked by government soldiers. He returned to find that the village had been torched.

**“They destroyed my shop... I fled east, high in the mountains... Three days later I returned to the villages. Everything had been looted. They looted the market and the houses... They brought hay to help to set the shops on fire after they looted. I realized that they used hay because there was no hay in my shop [when I left] and when I came back there was hay in the shop [against the wall]. A little of [the hay] was not fully burnt.”<sup>119</sup>**

Mwurrow, a student in his early thirties, was inside the Lawei Quranic School with many other students and teachers when it was bombed and then attacked by soldiers. He told Amnesty International that no members of the SLAWAW present in the school when it was attacked. “The planes came first... They bombed part of the school... I was inside the school at the moment the bombs landed. Some people died... I saw four dead people... We ran away. Then the attackers arrived by land”, he said.<sup>120</sup>

Tindile, in her twenties, was in her home in Sworrah when it was attacked and bombed.

**“[Sworrah] was attacked on Friday [15 January] at night... The aircraft bombed the village. We ran away... I still don’t know where my father is... [While we were running] I saw people on the road who were dead. I saw dead people in different places... In one place [in Jaar Taga, near Kati village], I saw [many] bodies scattered on the ground... In another place I also saw [many] bodies... There were 22 of us running... two adults and 20 children... We arrived in [this town] after four days of walking... We didn’t see the attackers but we lost children to the bombing... while we were walking, we also found those who had run before us... Sometimes we found them hiding under trees. We found some children who died of hunger or diarrhoea... Some died in their mothers’ arms.”<sup>121</sup>**

Mo’o, in her thirties, was in her farm on the outskirts of Sworrah at the time of the attack. She told Amnesty International that her seven children came running out of the village into her farm as the attack started; they fled to the bush together. “Four days later, I went back to the village and saw the dead bodies as they were about to be buried. The whole village was burned,” she said. Mo’o provided Amnesty International with the names of three people who were killed during the attack.<sup>122</sup>

Adim, in his fifties, told Amnesty International that he witnessed one man being shot and killed as he fled an attack on Tado.

**“On Saturday January 16 at about 9 in the morning, the government mobilized their troops. Government and Janjaweed. They came on trucks and on the backs of animals. They attacked our village. They started shooting randomly. Then people ran from the village. As people were running, they [government forces] torched houses and looted livestock. Some people were shot. Some ran to the brooks. I saw one person who was shot and died**

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<sup>116</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>117</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>118</sup> Amnesty International interview in June 2016.

<sup>119</sup> Amnesty International interview in June 2016.

<sup>120</sup> Amnesty International interviews in May 2016.

<sup>121</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>122</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

immediately... While we were running he was shot... I was not that close but I saw him fall down and I saw another who was shot in his mouth... I ran to Kude and then to Buri and then the government bombed us heavily which made us run away again ... Then we ran up to the lakes [near the Deriba Caldera] ... then we decided to come back down [the mountain] and come to [this town]. It was difficult because the Janjaweed controls the road to [this town] and they charge a lot of money to pass. We had to leave a lot of people behind [because they could not afford to pay] ... When we arrived in the [IDP] camp in this town, the government told us that [we could not register]. Now we have nothing. We do not know what to do.”<sup>123</sup>

Badawi, a religious leader, also fled Tado while it was being attacked. He told Amnesty International that he watched the village burn while hiding on a nearby hill. “They burned the village down and looted everything. We could see from the hills that [Tado] was on fire,” he said.<sup>124</sup>

## ATTACKS AROUND WADI TOURO



A *wadi* in Jebel Marra, 2008. ©Jérôme Tubiana

Burro is a small village 7km south west of Juldo at the bank of Wadi Touro, a large *wadi* that southwest of Juldo.<sup>125</sup> Amnesty International interviewed three women who were inside Burro when it was attacked in April. According to the three women, members of the SLA/AW had been in the village, but they left the area several days before the attack.

Maye, in her thirties, was at her home when she heard gunfire inside the village. “[After I heard the gunfire] I stood up. I saw Janjaweed on horseback, camelback, and motorbikes,” she said. “[During the attack] my husband was killed. And two of my brothers-in-law were killed. And my cousin was killed. My husband and my two brothers-in-law were killed in front of me... Most of the young men in the village were killed.”

Maye provided Amnesty International with the names of her four family members who were killed and the names of three women and two children who were killed during attacks on Burro and a neighbouring village of Karinge.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>124</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>125</sup> Amnesty International interview in June 2016.

<sup>126</sup> Amnesty International interview in June 2016.

Teyah, in her twenties, was in Wadi Touro with her donkey, fetching water for her family, when three bombs landed inside the village, killing an old woman. Teyah fled into the forest where she hid for several days before attempting to walk to Nertiti. While heading towards Nertiti she was found and raped by two militia members.

**“We hid inside the forest; we did not go back to the village... We were so scared... Whenever we built a fire the planes would come and bomb at night... [A few days later] we tried to walk to Juldo but we didn’t make it because the area was overwhelmed by Janjaweed and bombing... Then we tried to walk to Nertiti. Then we were arrested by Arabs riding camels... some of the other women with me were raped... I was raped by two men. And I was pregnant... It was done in the bush ... We were six women... [After we were raped, two of us were released.] ... The other [four women], we never saw them again... Then we found some Arab women and they gave us a donkey. And then we came to Nertiti... In Nertiti I had a miscarriage because of the rape... Then I found my children in Nerititi... Then we decided to come to [this town] ... We wanted safety. We thought that if we made it to [this town] then we would be safe... but at night the Janjaweed come on bikes and drive around the [IDP] camp. They are doing what they want to anyone... Now we are here in a bad situation, without shelter... [Women] cannot go back to the farms to depend on ourselves because they will rape us. And if the men go they will beat them or kill them... they say they are fighting the rebels but they are not fighting the rebels... they loot, rape women, and kill children. They are cowards.”<sup>127</sup>**

The village of Karinge is 1.5km east of Burro, on the other side of Wadi Touro. Karinge was also attacked in April, just prior to the attack on Burro. On the night of the attack, Khatirah, in her thirties, had gone with her new-born child to visit her sister in Burro. While she was away, Karinge was bombed. The next morning, she returned to Karinge to look for her family and found that four of her children, and numerous other people from the village, had been killed by the bombing.

**“There was an old woman who was sleeping outside the village with her cattle and her children and her grandchildren. A bomb fell on them and they all died.... My children were sleeping in their room in our compound and the bomb fell on their room. I found the children dead... I did not see my husband, just the dead bodies of my children and then I ran... I ran to Buri but two planes were bombing in the area... I ran again... I came across people slaughtered in caves... The caves were in a brook between Buri and Toura... They were children and adults... They were in three caves, four, five, and six people dead in each cave... some were shot... some were slaughtered by knives... I recognized three of them. They were from Birja village... Then I ran to Kwila... [Around Kwila] there were also planes bombing; we could not stay... from Kwila we ran to Baringo then through the forest to Tado and from Tado to [this town] ... I have spent two days in [this town]. There was no security. Government security people came in the [IDP] camp at night and beat and raped people. The night we arrived in the camp three men were killed and four women were raped... There is a problem of water in the camp. We have nothing to drink. We do not know what to do.”<sup>128</sup>**

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<sup>127</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>128</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.



Children displaced by fighting hiding in caves near Dursa village, March 2015. ©Adriane Ohanesian

## ATTACKS IN JULDO

Juldo is a town on the northwest edge of Jebel Marra, between Nertiti and Golo. The town is entirely under government control; there is a government base inside the village. Amnesty International spoke with two people who survived attacks inside Juldo and who had witnessed killings and a large number of incidents of sexual violence. Amnesty International also interviewed one woman who witnessed an attack as she was trying to enter Juldo. Journalists have also documented sexual violence in Juldo during this period.<sup>129</sup>

Nillah, in her forties, had been living in Juldo after being displaced from attacks on her village earlier in the conflict. She was living with a group of fifteen other displaced families in a compound in the middle of the town. She said that the compound was routinely attacked by soldiers who had arrived in the town at the start of the Jebel Marra offensive.

**“Three months ago [in January or February] attackers started raping and beating us... They [were based] in the part of Juldo which is forest, they stayed in the farms there. They displaced some of the displaced people who were living there... They would come into town and invade houses. In the day they hang out in the farms; in the night they attack us... My house was invaded more than seven times... I was beaten in my compound several times, by whips and by the butts of guns... they would yell: “We are not Janjaweed, we are JM3. We will rape you and kill all of your men.” ... They beat men and they took away girls... [many] girls have been taken or raped... they took them on different nights. Sometimes two, sometimes three... [during the last attack] I was at home when the attackers came. And I resisted. That is why I was so badly beaten... The attackers were wearing military uniforms ... One time when we went to go fetch firewood we found seven girls [in the forest] who had been taken two weeks before. They had all been gang raped. They were unable to walk... others [girls who had been abducted] were found the next week... Four have not returned... They took men too... One man [who I know], one of the fathers, was taken away because he refused to let his daughter be taken... [During one attack] my daughter was hit on the head and she lost [sight in] one of her eyes... She is still in Juldo... I came to [Nertiti] to get treatment... I felt a pain in my chest from the beatings.”**

<sup>129</sup> “Mass rape in Guldo in Darfur’s Jebel Marra,” *Radio Dabanga*, 30 March 2016, available at [www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/mass-rape-in-guldo-in-darfur-s-jebel-marra](http://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/mass-rape-in-guldo-in-darfur-s-jebel-marra)

Nillah provided Amnesty International with the names of seven woman and girls who were living inside her compound who were raped between January and April.<sup>130</sup>

Fockah, in her thirties, had also been displaced to Juldo by violence earlier in the conflict. She described how she and her neighbours were attacked multiple times by soldiers.

**“People came and attacked us in our compounds at night. They raped women... I know four women who were raped... The [SAF] is based in Juldo but the men who raped these women are the people who came in January. It was the RSF wearing military clothes... They arrived on horses and camels... Some stayed with the military... Some stayed where the mango trees are... In January I was attacked in my house and they invaded and took everything that we had... [A man living in our compound] was killed. He was killed by the attackers when he tried to defend his wife [against men who were trying to rape her].”<sup>131</sup>**

Wodil, a woman from a small village on the outskirts of Sorrong in central Jebel Marra, was forced to flee her village by an attack. She spent several days running from village to village trying to escape attackers. When she arrived near the entrance to Juldo she was attacked again.

**“We walked to Juldo and we saw a checkpoint [before we entered Juldo] ... Men came from the checkpoint and beat us with whips. They burned our shoes and they raped us. They took our shoes and they threw them in the fire... About 50 women came together to the checkpoint... Then [after they took our shoes] they started firing and we ran away... Nine of us ran away together... All nine of us were raped. I was raped. I was raped near the checkpoint... It was government soldiers and Arabs who raped us... My husband divorced me after [he found out I was raped]. He said I was sick and I was carrying a disease.”<sup>132</sup>**

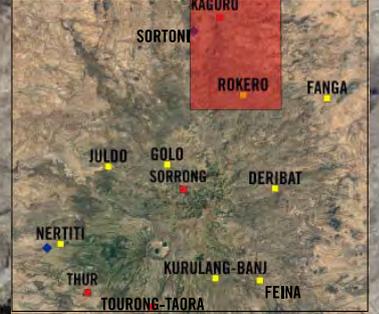
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<sup>130</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>131</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

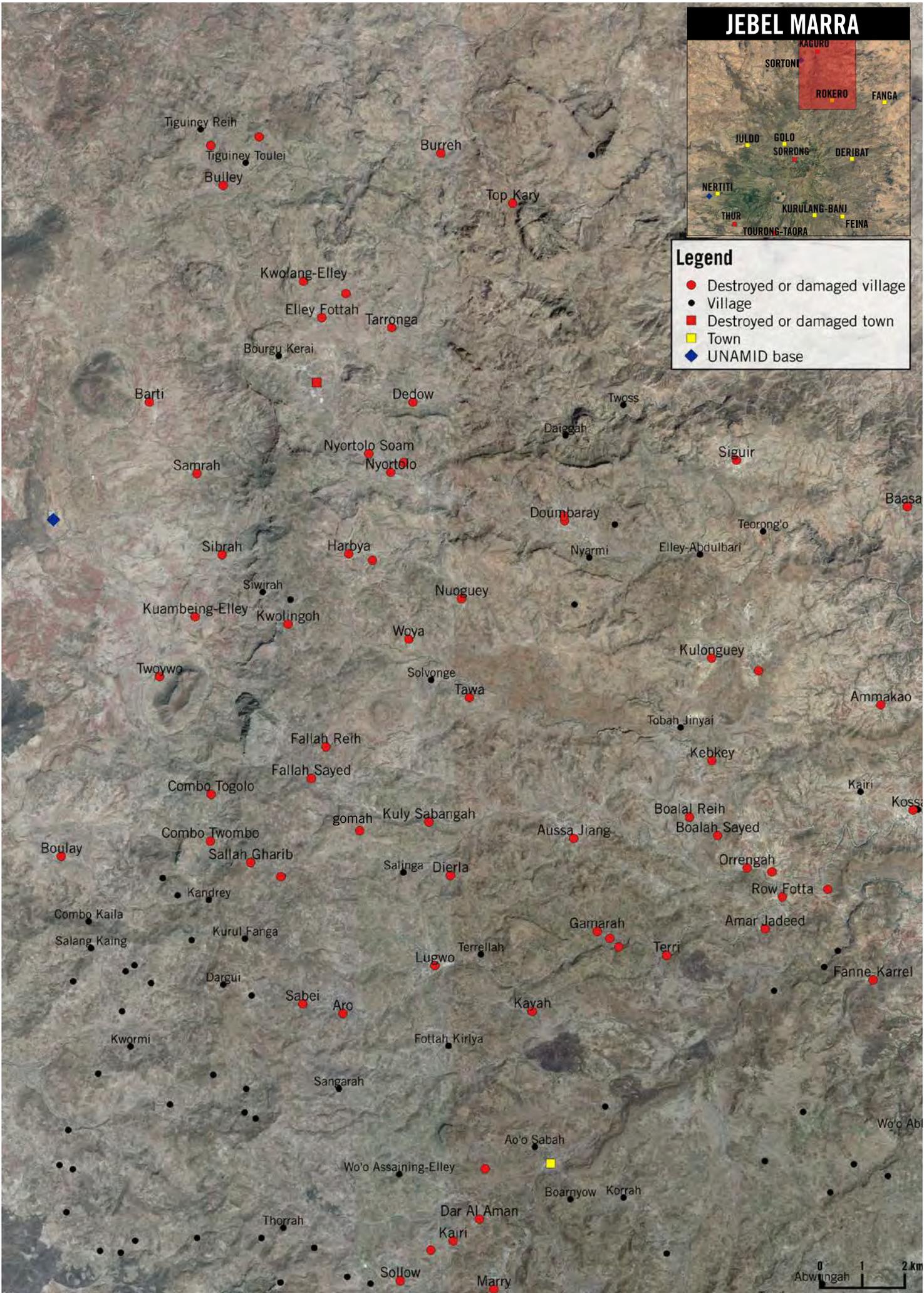
<sup>132</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

# JEBEL MARRA



**Legend**

- Destroyed or damaged village
- Village
- Destroyed or damaged town
- Town
- ◆ UNAMID base



## 5.3 NORTHERN JEBEL MARRA

### 5.3.1 SUMMARY OF ATTACKS

Beginning in January 2016, Sudanese government forces carried out numerous attacks throughout northern Jebel Marra. The attacks took place east of the UNAMID Sortoni base, around Rokero, Row Fottah, and Kaguro.

These attacks had a devastating impact on the civilian population. The vast majority of the villages in this area were attacked and looted, and a large percentage were destroyed or heavily damaged. Most of the population has been displaced to IDP camps in Sortoni, Tawila, and Kebkabiya.

According to UN, media, civilians, and armed opposition sources, air attacks began at the end of December and continued throughout January and February. Government forces were reportedly present in the area as early as late December 2015.<sup>133</sup> Firefights between government forces and the SLA/AW began in early January in northeastern Jebel Marra, in the area around Row Fottah and Bourgu, and in northwestern Jebel Marra in the areas around Sortoni and Kaguro.<sup>134</sup>

On 14 January, UNAMID, from its base in Sortoni, reported that bombs fell near Samrah, approximately 3km east of the base.<sup>135</sup> UNAMID observed falling bombs in neighbouring areas multiple times throughout January and February.<sup>136</sup>

By 18 January, UNAMID reported that hundreds of people from surrounding villages had sought refuge around their base.<sup>137</sup> This number continued to rise rapidly and substantially for several months. The total number of IDPs in Sortoni is disputed. There was a large discrepancy between the number of IDPs verified by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the number verified by the World Food Program (WFP); IOM was ultimately prevented from doing future verifications.<sup>138</sup> In March, using figures from the IOM, OCHA reported 62,192 people had been displaced to Sortoni, 16,800 of whom had been verified. In June, using figures from the WFP, OCHA estimated that 21,536 people had been displaced to Sortoni and that all of them had been verified.<sup>139</sup> Some humanitarian actors familiar with the situation believe that figure to be too low.<sup>140</sup> NGOs have been told by the government to do their planning based on a lower WFP figure.<sup>141</sup>

Within a couple of days of the start of the ground offensive, SLA/AW had lost major strategic positions around Row Fottah and Kaguro.<sup>142</sup>

According to SLA/AW commanders in the area at the time, the government force that attacked the areas around Row Fottah included several thousand troops; in contrast, there were only 200 armed opposition group fighters based in the areas before another hundred or so arrived in support.<sup>143</sup> Around Kaguro, SLA/AW fighters also reported being overwhelmed by the number of government forces and associated air support.<sup>144</sup> Civilian residents of Kaguro and surrounding villages report that Antonovs and helicopters were used during the government offensive in January.

After defeating the SLA/AW during the initial battles, government forces proceeded to attack numerous villages in the area; many were attacked multiple times. Government forces also set up bases in Kaguro and

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<sup>133</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document. s; Interview with SLA/AW commanders in May 2016.

<sup>134</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW Commanders in June and July 2016.

<sup>135</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 22 March 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268), p. 2.

<sup>136</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>137</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>138</sup> Amnesty International interview with NGO official in July.

<sup>139</sup> UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Jebel Marra Crisis: Fact Sheet," Issue 6, 30 June 2016, available at [reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Jebel\\_Marra\\_Crisis\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_23\\_Jun\\_2016.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Jebel_Marra_Crisis_Fact_Sheet_23_Jun_2016.pdf); UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Jebel Marra Crisis: Fact Sheet," Issue 4, 10 March 2016, available at [reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Jebel\\_Marra\\_Crisis\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_10\\_Mar\\_2016.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Jebel_Marra_Crisis_Fact_Sheet_10_Mar_2016.pdf)

<sup>140</sup> Amnesty International interview with NGO official in July.

<sup>141</sup> Amnesty International interview with NGO official in July.

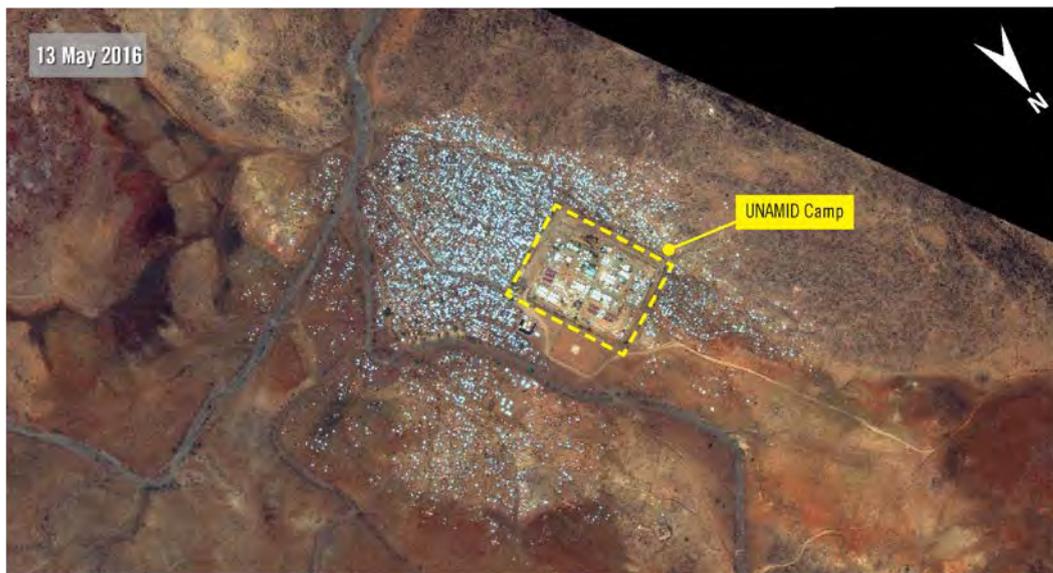
<sup>142</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW commanders in May and June.

<sup>143</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW commanders in May and June.

<sup>144</sup> Amnesty International interviews with SLA/AW commanders in May and June.



UNAMID base in Sortoni, 24 December 2015. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

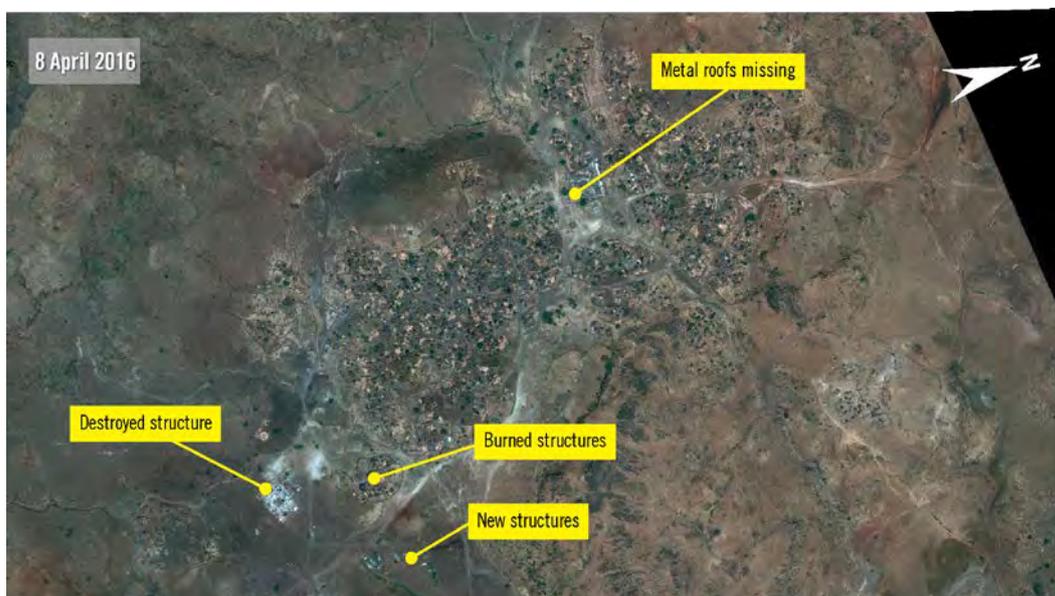


UNAMID base in Sortoni, 13 May 2016. Thousands of tents surround the base, housing people who fled violence in northern Jebel Marra. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

Row Fottah. Using satellite imagery, Amnesty International has detected new structures, which could be ad hoc military bases, situated in the locations of government bases reported by armed opposition group commanders and civilians, which have been used as positions from which to attack the SLA/AW as well as the civilian population.



Kaguro Town, 5 November 2015. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Kaguro Town, 8 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

Intermittent fighting between SLA/AW and government forces in north-eastern Jebel Marra, around Row Fottah, continued through March; intermittent fighting between SLA/AW and government forces in north-western Jebel Marra, around Kaguro, continued through June.<sup>145</sup>

The most intense fighting and the vast majority of civilian displacement in northern Jebel Marra took place in January and February. By the beginning of March, the government declared that its forces were in control of all of north Jebel Marra<sup>146</sup>.

According to the UN, 90 residents were killed by government forces in an attack in Rokero on 8 and 9 April.<sup>147</sup>

According to SLA/AW sources, in early April, government forces with several hundred trucks defeated SLA/AW fighters in an area between Rokero and Marra, a village located approximately 3km southwest of

<sup>145</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>146</sup> "Sudan army says in control of areas of north Jebel Marr," *Sudan Tribune*, 2 March 2016, available at [www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article58182](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article58182).

<sup>147</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 1 July 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587)

Rokero. After the battle, government forces proceeded to attack, pillage, and ultimately torch several villages in the area. The government forces remained in the area for one day, after which SLA/AW returned to the area. As of mid-August, civilians had returned to some of the attacked villages, with the exception of Ao'o Gharib and Dar Al Aman, which were severely burned.<sup>148</sup>

Government-allied militias continued to attack villages and the displaced population around the UNAMID Sortoni base in May, including an attack in 8 May that killed eight people.

Amnesty International secured and analysed three high-resolution satellite images of areas in northern Jebel Marra: a 35KM<sup>2</sup> image of the area immediately east of the UNAMID base in Sortoni, 25KM<sup>2</sup> image of Kaguro village and areas to the south, and a 25KM<sup>2</sup> image of the area around Row Fottah and to the north.

In the image around the Sortoni IDP camp, there were five villages, all located 3 to 4km from the UNAMID base. Amnesty International detected that three of the five villages, Barti, Twaywo, and Kurambeing-Elley were significantly damaged, and the other two, Samrah and Sibrah were slightly damaged. This analysis largely corroborates testimony given by witnesses asserting that all five villages were attacked and looted, and that three of the five were partially burned.

In the image of the area around Kaguro, eight villages were found to be significantly or slightly damaged, including Kaguro, Dedow, Harbya, Kwobey, Nyortolo, Aeow Kworoing-Elley, Nyortolo, and Nyortolo Soam. This analysis was consistent with testimony received from survivors and witnesses to attacks in these villages.

In the images of the area around Row Fottah, there were eight villages that were destroyed and two that were severely damaged, including Kuloguey, Bougu, Kebkey, Boalah Reih, Boalah Sayed, Orrengah, Jim Sibre, Row Fottah, and Rongatass. This is consistent with testimony from survivors who said that all ten of the villages were attacked and looted.

Through the analysis of publicly available satellite imagery, Amnesty International was able to confirm that 51 other villages in western Jebel Marra, not located inside the abovementioned 75km<sup>2</sup> area, were either destroyed or damaged, including Fallah Sayed, Fallah Reih, Sallah Gharib, Sallah Sabah, Amar Jadeed, Aussa Jiang, Kossah, Ammakao, Nogyey, Terri, Gamarah, Luwgo, Aro, Sabei, Kayah, Bulley, Tiguinye Sabah, Tiguinye Gharib, Elley Fattah, Kwolang-Elley, Barraah, Tarronga, Burreh, Top Kary, Kwobey, Woya, Kuly Sabangah, Baasah, Siguir, Ao'o Gharib, Combo Togolo, Tunduba, Diora, Tabaldiya, Togomah, Dierla, Doumbaray, Tawa, Tuwah Kwori, Foaga'ah, Dabass, Saing'o Fanne-Karrel, Dar Al Aman, Kairi, Burengah-Karay, Marry, Sollow, Kwolingoh, Dallu Dickow, and Combo Twombo.

In total, Amnesty International was able to detect 74 villages in northern Jebel Marra that were destroyed or damaged. Survivors and human rights monitors provided the names of numerous other villages in northern Jebel Marra that were attacked and looted.

Nearly the entire civilian populations from the villages attacked in northern Jebel Marra were displaced between January and April. In September 2016 they had not returned. Survivors of attacks repeatedly said that they could not return because of insecurity.

### **5.3.2 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS**

Amnesty International interviewed 54 survivors from 18 villages in northern Jebel Marra, including Rongatass, Row Fottah, Kworni, Twaywo, Aro, Salinga, Kuryn, Eldoaring-Elley, Comba Aramba, Kaguro, Dullo, Sallah Sabah, Bourgu, Boalah Sabah, Barti, Tabaldia, and Boulay.

All the survivors had been forced to flee their homes. Most had lost all of their personal belongings. Nearly all were from villages that were destroyed or heavily damaged. Many had experienced severe physical violence. Most could identify civilians from their family or their village who were killed during the attacks. Several reported that government forces raped women.

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<sup>148</sup> Amnesty International interview with SLA/AW commander in August 2016.

## ATTACKS AROUND ROW FOTTAH



Row Fottah Village 5 November 2015. ©DigitalGlobe



Row Fottah Village 8 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe

Sarrah, in her forties, was on her way to fetch water on the outskirts of the village of Rongatass, one kilometre east of Row Fottah in late December or early January, when several bombs fell in the surrounding areas. After the bombing stopped, Sarrah returned to the village. When she arrived, she found that three of her children had been killed by the bombs. She was told that all the children from her extended family had taken shelter under a tree inside her family's compound. The bomb landed directly on top of them. Everyone was wounded. Five children died immediately. Three died from their wounds during the next week.<sup>149</sup>

About two weeks later, when the government forces entered the area, the surviving members of her family fled to a town outside of Jebel Marra.

Sarrah provided the names of the eight children from her family killed in the attack.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>149</sup> The village of Rongatass is also known as Mortajawey.

<sup>150</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

Ahmed, in his seventies, was in Row Fottah when it was attacked. “The rebels were not present inside [Row Fottah], they went and confronted the government outside the village and they were defeated,” he said. “The government attack [on Row Fottah] came the [day after the rebels were defeated].”<sup>151</sup>

Ahmed was in his compound in Row Fottah when it was bombed:

**“When we heard the planes, a lot of [members of my family] ran into my compound... Then they dropped a bomb in my compound. The bomb hit 18 people. Eight died. Ten are still anguishing with wounds... The next day we buried some of them, others we did not [have time to bury] ... then the attackers came [to the village] and we ran from the village... We ran to the bush... then some people ran to [different IDP camps].”**

Ahmed provided Amnesty International with the names of the eight members of his family who were killed by the bomb and with the names of eight people from Row Fottah who were killed during the ground attack the following day.<sup>152</sup>

Buroh, a traditional leader from Row Fottah, provided the names of eight other children who were killed by another bomb that landed in Row Fottah on the same night.<sup>153</sup>

Issah, a teacher in his thirties, fled Row Fottah to Kayah, 6km southwest of Row Fottah, as the attack started. Issah had to flee Kayah when it was attacked the following day:

**“When the attackers came to [Kayah] we ran to a mountain, near the village of Aro [about 3 km away] ... At around 5 p.m. we could see the attackers leaving [Kayah] so we returned to the village. We found the village looted. And we found the village was [partly] burned, the fires were still burning... As their trucks were leaving we could see that they were filled with household goods and with foodstuffs... And we found four women who had been raped... We left the village that night and returned to the mountain... The next morning, we saw the government come back to the area. We could see them burn Aro and Lugo villages.”**

Issah left the mountain he was hiding in the following day and spent ten days fleeing through hills and brooks before arriving in a displaced persons camp on 3 February. Issah provided the names of seven people who were killed while fleeing the attack in Row Fottah, two women who were killed by rocket fire in Aro, two people who were shot while fleeing the attack on Kayah, and a man who was shot and killed inside Kayah while trying to prevent his daughter from being raped.<sup>154</sup>

Boalah Reih, 3km northwest of Row Fottah, and Boalah Sayed, 2km northwest of Row Fottah, were both attacked around the same time as Row Fottah in January and then again about a week later. Amnesty International interviewed two women, a teacher and a student, who survived the attacks in Boalah Sayed.

Maria, a student in her early twenties, was present in Boalah Sayed during both attacks:

**“We were in Boalah [Sayed] when the attack happened. It started with bombs falling outside of the village. Then a bomb fell in the middle of the village... We ran away. We spent several days hiding in the bush... Then five or six days later we came back to the village... We found the village empty. Some of the compounds had been burned... And then it was attacked again... The attackers came by land. We ran away again... During the second attack my neighbour was shot. I saw him get shot. But I continued running. It was just outside of the village... We ran back to the bush and stayed there for two months... Then we came to [this displaced persons camp].”<sup>155</sup>**

Habibah, in her thirties, had been displaced to Boalah Sayed as a result of violence earlier in the conflict. After she was displaced she became a teacher in a nearby village. She was at school teaching at the time of the attack:

**“I was in the school [in a different village] when the attack started. I was teaching a class... Our area had had a problem with female education. We had made a big campaign to sensitize people about the importance of sending girls to school. At the time of the attack we had more girls in schools than boys. Then the attackers came**

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<sup>151</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016

<sup>152</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016

<sup>153</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016

<sup>154</sup> Amnesty International interview in June 2016.

<sup>155</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.



Boloah Sayed village, 5 November 2015. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Boloah Sayed, 8 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

**and ruined everything... First we heard the planes. And then a bomb landed about 1km away [from the school]. The students were terrified. [The teachers] were trying to calm them down... I told the children to stay inside the class room. I went to the headmaster's office to find out what we should do. And then a bomb dropped right next to the class I was teaching. It was just a few metres from the class, between the class and the fence... Part of the classroom was destroyed. Three students were killed and many were wounded... Then everyone ran in their own direction. I ran back to my village and I found that it was also bombed... Then we ran into the bush... My family lost everything [during the attack]. Our livestock was stolen... I met my mother and my children in the bush three or four days later... We spent almost three months in the bush surviving on wild fruits and stagnant water... Then we walked for three days to get to [this IDP camp] ... On the road to [the IDP camp] the Janjaweed found us. They beat us. And stole everything we had left.”<sup>156</sup>**

<sup>156</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

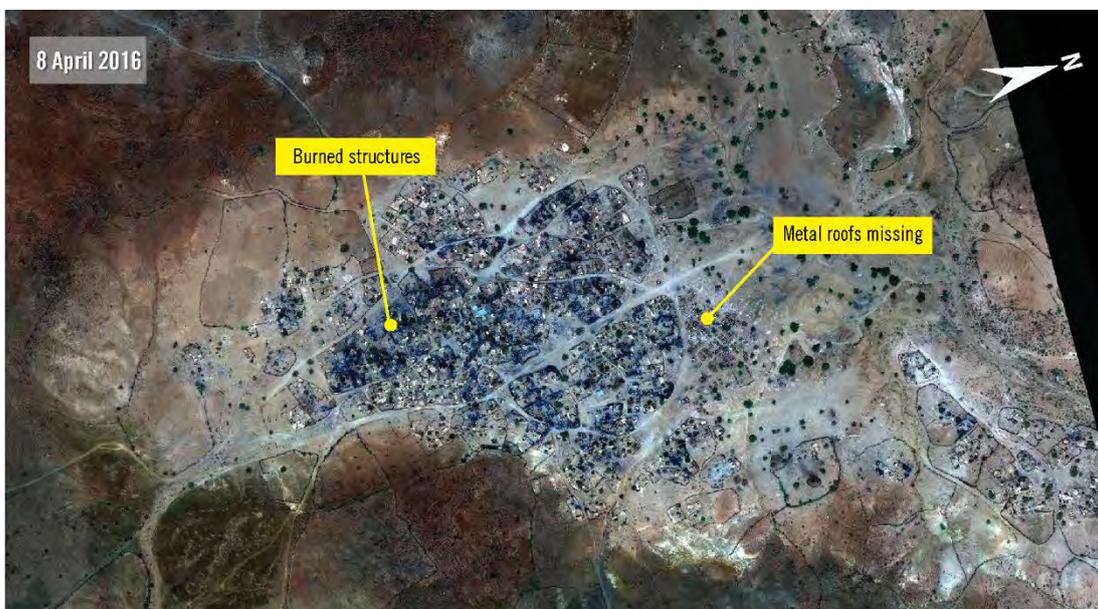
The villages of Bourgu, Kuloguey, and Tawa were also attacked soon after Row Fottah. Abduljalil, in his thirties, was present in both Tawa and Bougu when they were attacked.

**“I was in Tawa village when it was attacked. Then I fled to Bougu [to find my parents]. And then Bougu was attacked... I fled with my parents to the bush... Two days later we returned to the village... When we arrived in the village the attackers were still there. They arrested me and took all of my money. They tied me up and threatened to kill me... I told them I was a teacher... They called someone on a *Thuraya* [satellite phone] and they spoke about me. And then they left the village and left me tied up.”**

Surunei, in his forties, provided Amnesty International with the names of 11 adults and two children who were killed in Bourgu and in the neighbouring village of Tawa.<sup>157</sup>



Bourgu village and Kuloguey villages, 5 November 2015. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Bourgu village and Kuloguey villages, 8 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

<sup>157</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

## ATTACKS AROUND FALLAH REIH AND FALLAH SAYED

The villages of Fallah Reih and Fallah Sayed are located about 3.5 km southwest of Tawa. They were both attacked by government forces on 17 January.<sup>158</sup>

Aawaye, in her twenties, was in bed in her home in Fallah Reih when it was attacked. She told Amnesty International that a few armed opposition group members had come to the village a few days before the attack but that they had left. "We lost a lot of fellows. ... They attacked at early morning, it was still a bit dark. They killed many people, even my husband was killed while we were running away", she said.

Aawaye provided the name of her husband and one other man who was killed during the attack.<sup>159</sup>

Hamid, in his forties, was in Fallah Sayed when it was attacked. He told Amnesty International that he saw the bodies of 17 people who were shot on the days of the attack.<sup>160</sup>

Borgoh, a teacher in his thirties, was in Sallah Sabah, a village about 2.5km south of Fallah Sayed, when it was attacked. He fled up a hill east of Sallah Sabah. He told Amnesty International that SLA/AW fighters were not present in Sallah Sabah when it was attacked but that some were in the hills outside of Sallah Gharib. Borgoh witnessed several women and girls being raped while he was hiding on a hill adjacent to the city.

**"What I saw was [government forces] arresting people... I saw them being arrested and raped and at the end they took them... They were being raped inside the village... We were on the top [of the hill] we could see while they were arresting and even while they were raping... I saw with my own eyes [many women] while they were being raped... I know the girls... Four people were killed... I participated in burying them... Two were shot while running. Two were arrested and shot... One of [the people who was killed] was a woman who was trying to prevent her daughters from being raped. They shot her. Then her daughters were raped... One [of the people who was killed] was a woman who was raped... There were other women with her when she was killed. They told us that she was raped by four men and then killed."**

Borgoh fled to a displaced persons camp after the attack and when he subsequently returned to Sallah Sabah to see if anything in the village was salvageable and to try to find survivors, he found the village significantly damaged.<sup>161</sup>

Salih, in his thirties, was in his compound in the village of Lugwo, 4km southeast of Fallah Sabah when the village was attacked. "My kids ran away... [The attackers] found me. I was beaten. They told me that I was Tora Bora [a rebel] and that I knew where the rebels were. I said that I was not Tora Bora and I did not know where the rebels were... They beat me with whips... then I ran away."

Salih took his family to a displaced persons camp then returned to Lugwo to try to find if anything was left in his house and to bury the bodies of the villagers who were killed. When he returned he found that the village had been completely burned down.

Salih provided the names of four men in the village who were killed.<sup>162</sup>

Kaldoumo, in her mid-teens, was in Dullo village when it was attacked in January. She told Amnesty International how she fled from the village with her neighbour who was shot and killed while they were running. She said that the SLA/AW fought against government forces outside of the village. After the SLA/AW ran away she said that, while hiding on a nearby hill, she could see government soldiers burning the village. After the attack she fled to Sortoni. Kaldouma said she spent five days travelling through the bush to get to Sortoni, during which time she remembers coming across many dead bodies scattered on the ground. "They were shot. Their faces were messed up. There were many of them", she said.<sup>163</sup>

Aziz, the father of Kaldouma, was in his compound in Dullo when the village was attacked by government soldiers in uniforms and Janjaweed. The night of the attack, after the fighting had stopped and the government forces had left, he returned to the village and found it burned. "None of the huts were standing", he said. "I saw the dead bodies. We went back and buried them."<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>159</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>160</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>161</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>162</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>163</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>164</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

## ATTACKS AROUND KAGURO

Kaguro is located in northern Jebel Marra, in the southern part of an administrative area known as Jebel Si. Government forces reportedly fought the SLA/AW outside and inside of the village in January.<sup>165</sup>

Babikir, in his fifties, was in Kaguro the night it was attacked. His wife and daughter were killed during the attack.

**“My wife was shot and killed. One of my daughters was killed... We were trying to run. But the attack came from different sides. We did not know where to run. My wife was killed while she was tending to our livestock. My daughter was carrying her [three-year-old] brother on her back when they were shot. The boy was injured but he did not die... A lot of women ran into the bush. They were found [by the attackers] ... I was not with them but at some point after I saw some women who were naked and running towards us... They told us that they had been raped... Two [of the rape victims] were badly injured and taken to [a hospital in a town outside of Jebel Marra] ... Six were treated by local herbalists... Most of the three hundred and fifty families in the village ran to [a town outside of Jebel Marra]. [Government forces] set up a barrier to Sortoni so we could not go there.”<sup>166</sup>**

Surbul, in his sixties, was in Tabaldia, 15km north of Kaguro when it was bombed, the night before government troops arrived. He fled the village after the bombing, along with most of the village residents. He provided the names of five people who were killed in a neighbouring village of Bara Fugo.<sup>167</sup>

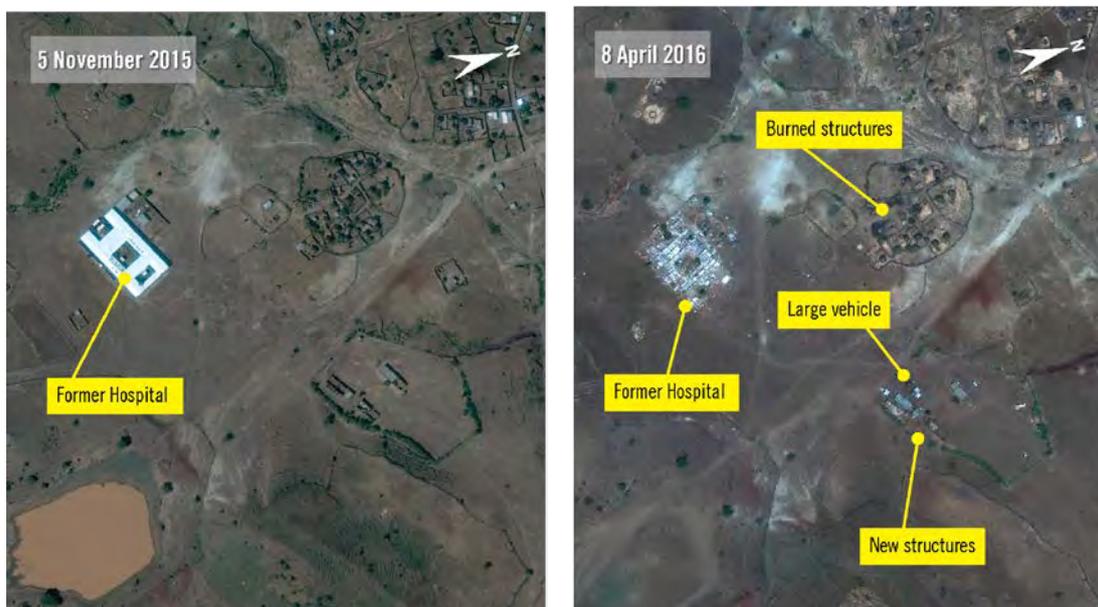


Kaguro town, March 2015. ©Adriane Ohanesian

<sup>165</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>166</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>167</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.



Former Medicine Sans Frontiers (MSF) hospital, in Kaguro town, 5 November 2015 and 8 April 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

## ATTACKS AROUND BOULAY

Boulay is a village 8km south of the UNAMID Sortoni base. Boulay was attacked twice shortly after the ground offensive began. Amnesty International spoke with five survivors from attacks in the vicinity of Boulay.

Mahmoud, a teacher in his thirties, was in Boulay when it was attacked in January. He told Amnesty International that SLA/AW fighters had not been present inside the village for more than a month prior to the attack.

**“The village was attacked twice. In the first attack there was a ground invasion. The second attack was with bombs... [During the first attack] ... I was in the school teaching the children and we were surprised by the shelling of the school. Everybody ran to the hills... [During the second attack] I was still hiding on a hill south of the village... We saw the Antonovs come and bomb the village... then we ran to [out of the village] ... Several old people who could not run away were killed by bombs [in Boulay].”<sup>168</sup>**

Kerroow, in her sixties, was inside Kuryne, a small village near Boulay, when it was attacked one morning in January. “We don’t even know the rebels. They never came to our village,” she said. “We were eating. The bombs came first. Then men on horseback and camels. Then trucks with people in uniforms. Some people had their faces masked... One man from our village was killed... We ran away... Since the attack I have not seen my husband... We ran to [a displaced persons camp] ... People died of thirst after we arrived in the camp.”<sup>169</sup>

Dickow, in her thirties, was in her compound in the village of Eldoaring-Elley, south of Boulay, when it was bombed at around midnight.

**“Bombs fell inside our village and some compounds were set on fire... We were in our compound and one bomb fell on it, which killed my two children... The Janjaweed came the next day, around sunset and they killed people... We ran away and spent one night in the bush and then we arrived in Sortoni... In Sortoni the Janjaweed beat people and rape women whenever they go to get firewood... Some girls were kidnapped for days... I got so scared. That is why I came with my children to [this displaced persons camp].”**

Dickow provided the names of her two children and two other people who were killed by bombs in Kuryne.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>169</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>170</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

Maidah, in her thirties, provided Amnesty International with the names of one woman and one boy who were killed in Combo Aramba, south of Boulay, when it was attacked in January.

### ATTACKS AROUND THE UNAMID BASE IN SORTONI



Shelters for people displaced by fighting in northern Jebel Marra surround the UNAMID base in Sortoni, 2016. ©Amnesty International

Fatimah was in Saliga village, 12km southwest of the UNAMID base in Sortoni, when the village was attacked in January. She ran barefoot into the bush during the attack and spent three or four days running and hiding until she reached Twoywo village, 3.5km southeast of Sortoni.

**“When we arrived near [the village of Twoywo], that is when they killed [two of] my children, while we were running away... I saw 10 people die... They chased them and they killed them in the bush. They were shot. Some were killed while running. Some were arrested and shot.”**

Fatimah provided the names of eight people, including two of her children, who were killed during the attacks.

Abdelrahim, in his thirties, from Twoywo village, 4km east of the UNAMID base in Sortoni, was one of the first people to arrive at the UNAMID base seeking protection. He told Amnesty International his story.

**“The government forces came to [Twoywo on 15 or 16 January]. They found us in the village. They beat us. And killed some innocent people. Then we all ran away. Some of us ran direct to UNAMID [Sortoni base] for protection. We were the first displaced people to arrive at UNAMID... When we reached UNAMID they did not allow us to enter into the base. They told us to leave. ... While we were waiting outside the base, soldiers came and attacked us. They [abducted] women and raped them... Seven girls were taken on the first day... I saw it with my own eyes... Then [one or two days later] UNAMID told us we could stay next to the base... The UNAMID base was too small for everyone. Many people stayed outside... [On the fourth day we were there] the attackers came back and started firing at people... The attacks in the surrounding areas continued until 1 February. On February 1, some people decided to try to go back to their villages to get cereals. Because there was no NGOs and we needed to eat... These people found that the attackers were still in their villages. Many of them were killed, including a lot of young children... Some of those who had left ran back to UNAMID and told us what happened.”**



Twaywo village, 24 December 2015. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Twaywo village, 13 May 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

One of the people who came back was a boy from Twaywo who told Abdelrahim that he had seen the corpses of his grandmother and two other women, all of whom he identified by name, who appeared to have been burned in their huts.

Abdelrahim provided the names of nine people who were killed during attacks in and around TWOYU.<sup>171</sup> Shwomain, a traditional leader from Barti, a village 3km northeast of UNAMID Sortoni, told Amnesty International that Barti was attacked several times in January. He provided the names of 19 people who he says were killed in and around Barti in January.

On 8 and 9 May, members of government-allied militias, reportedly led by commanders from the RSF who fought in the campaign in northern Jebel Marra in January and February, and who remained in the area, attacked Sortoni camp.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>172</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document. Amnesty International interviews in May 2016.

The attack was apparently incited as a result of cattle raiding by members of the SLA/AW, whom the attackers alleged were hiding in the camp.<sup>173</sup> The government has also accused SLA/AW elements of hiding inside the camp.<sup>174</sup>

The UN Secretary General's July 2016 report to the Security Council on Darfur described the attack as follows.

**“In Sorton[i], North Darfur, Northern Rezeigat carried out a series of attacks from 2 to 15 May against the internally displaced persons who had arrived recently from the Jebel Marra, accusing them of stealing their cattle and of being affiliated with SLA/AW. On 9 May, Rezeigat raided the camp for internally displaced persons in Sorton[i], killing six internally displaced persons and injuring six others, including a UNAMID peacekeeper. UNAMID apprehended two of the assailants, who were handed over to the government authorities.”<sup>175</sup>**

Amnesty International interviewed five individuals who provided the names of the eight individuals who were killed by bullets and rocket fire.<sup>176</sup> Two of the individuals who provided the names were themselves injured during the attack. Jurri, in his forties, was shot in the stomach during the attack. He had to stop the interview shortly after it began because he said it was too painful for him to talk.<sup>177</sup>

Several women resident in the camp were reportedly abducted and raped on the same day by the government-allied militia elements who attacked the camp.<sup>178</sup> According to caregivers residing at the camps, there have been many incidents where female residents of the camp have been raped outside of the camp. Lissan provided Amnesty with the names of survivors of rape he had cared for in Sortoni.<sup>179</sup> Gonddiri provided Amnesty international with the names of 35 rape survivors that she had documented since arriving in Sortoni in February.<sup>180</sup>



Bodies of people killed during an attack on a displaced people surround the UNAMID base in Sortoni, May 2016. ©Amnesty International

<sup>173</sup> Amnesty International interviews in May 2016.

<sup>174</sup> “North Darfur Urges UNAMID to drive rebels out of Sortoni Camp,” *Sudan Tribune*, 7 July 2016, available at [www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article59538](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article59538)

<sup>175</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 1 July 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587)

<sup>176</sup> Amnesty International Interviews in May 2016.

<sup>177</sup> Amnesty International Interviews in May 2016.

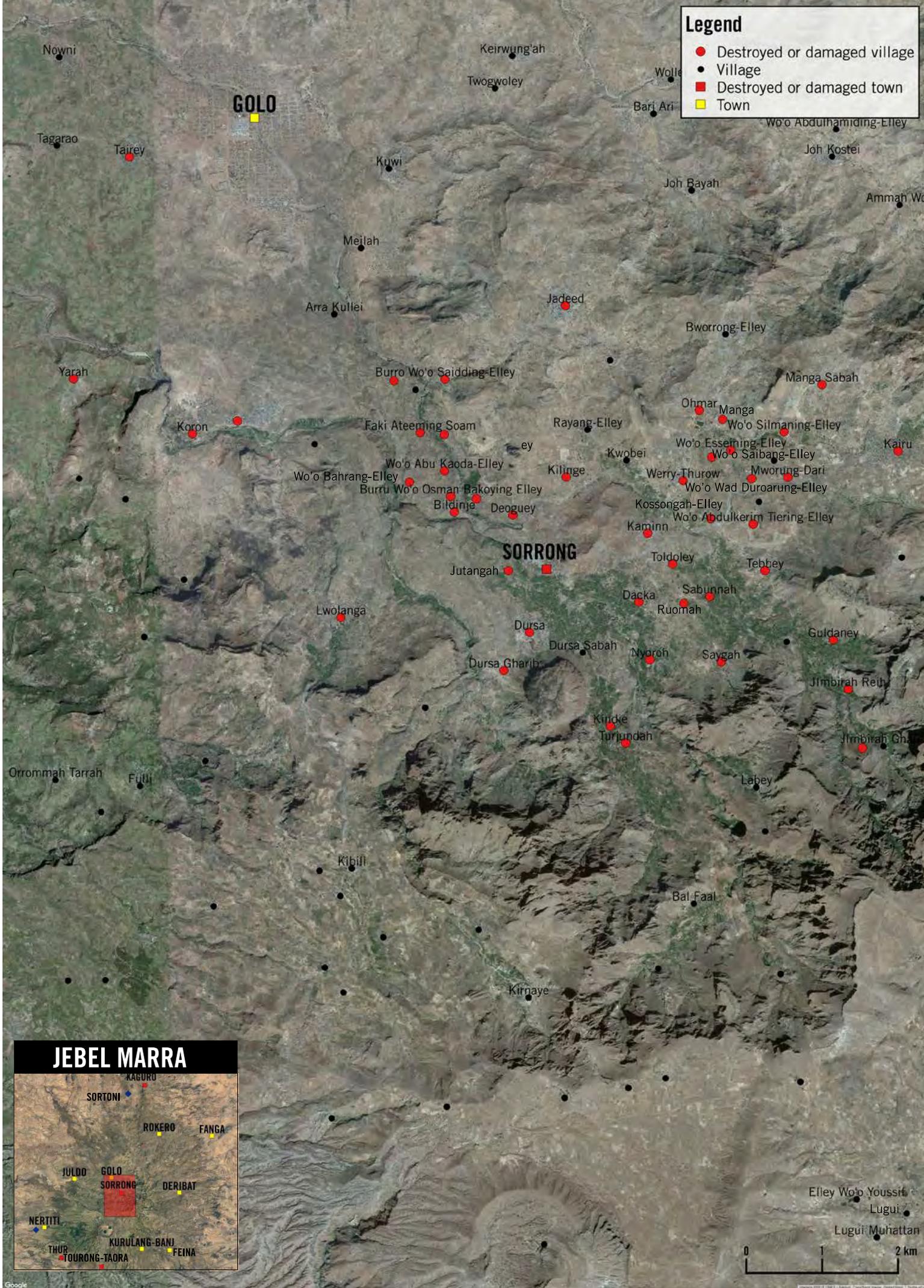
<sup>178</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>179</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>180</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

**Legend**

- Destroyed or damaged village
- Village
- Destroyed or damaged town
- Town



## 5.4 CENTRAL JEBEL MARRA

### 5.4.1 SUMMARY OF ATTACKS

In early to mid-January, Sudanese government forces, reportedly from their base in Zalingei, arrived at the SAF base in Golo, the largest city in Jebel Marra, to reinforce the SAF forces stationed in the town.

There is a *wadi* running southeast of Golo through a relatively narrow corridor that leads through the mountains to the village of Sorrong, approximately 6km away. Sorrong and the surrounding areas have been controlled by the SLA/AW throughout most of the conflict.

In January the government forces attacked villages to the east of Golo. They also attempted to capture the area around Sorrong; however, they were not able to gain control of the area and the government forces returned to Golo.<sup>181</sup>

In March and April, villages around Golo, including Koron,<sup>182</sup> were attacked. The areas around Sorrong were also heavily bombed in March and April.<sup>183</sup>

In late March, fighting resumed between the SLA/AW and government forces, culminating with a battle in the area northwest of Sorrong.<sup>184</sup> The UN reported that the SLA/AW ambushed a government convoy in the vicinity of Golo on 4 April. In early April, several thousand government troops reportedly participated in the battle against SLA/AW. On or around 8 April, government forces defeated the SLA/AW and captured Sorrong. On 12 April, the spokesman for the government declared “an end of the rebellion and mercenary movement in all five states of Darfur”, claiming that the government had full control of Jebel Marra.<sup>185</sup>

In the two weeks following the capture of Sorrong, government forces attacked scores of villages in the surrounding areas. The entire population of these villages fled into the mountains surrounding the villages.<sup>186</sup>

Amnesty International analysed high-resolution satellite imagery covering 25km<sup>2</sup> of land between Golo and Sorrong. Inside that 20km<sup>2</sup> area there are 21 villages. Sorrong was destroyed and 19 of the other villages severely damaged, including Koron, Seri Samm, Lwolanga, Dursa, Jutangah, Kilinge, Deoguey, Bildinje, Twaywo Madille, Burru Wo'o Osman Bakoying-Elley, Wo'o Bahrang-Elley, Wo'o Abu Koadah-Elley, Faki Ateeming Soam, Burru Wo'o Issang-Elley, Burru Wo'o Abderamaning-Elley, Burru Wo'o Saidding-Elley, and Jadeed.

Through the analysis of publicly available satellite imagery, Amnesty International was able to confirm that 30 additional villages in the area around Golo and Sorrong, primarily southeast of Sorrong, were damaged or destroyed, including Tairey, Yarah, Kindie, Turjundah, Nyoroh, Saygah, Jimbirah Sabah, Jimbirah Reih, Guldaney, Dacka, Sabunnah, Roumah, Toldoley, Tebbey, Kaminn, Wo'o Wad-Duroarung-Elley, Wo'o AbdulKerim Tiering-Elley, Werry-Thurrow, Mworung-Dari, Wo'o Sabaing-Elley, Wo'o Esseinine-Elley, Wo'o Silmaning-Elley, Ohmar, Manga, Manga Sabah, and Kairu.

In total, Amnesty International was able to detect 50 villages in central Jebel Marra that were destroyed or damaged. Survivors and human rights monitors provided the names of numerous other villages in central Jebel Marra that were attacked and looted.

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<sup>181</sup> Amnesty international interview with civilians and SLA/AW commanders in May and June.

<sup>182</sup> United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 1 July 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587)

<sup>183</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document; Amnesty International Interview in July 2016; [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/268); United Nations Security Council *Report of the Secretary General on African Union—United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 1 July 2016, available at [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/587).

<sup>184</sup> Amnesty International interview in with SLA/AW commander in August 2016.

<sup>185</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>186</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

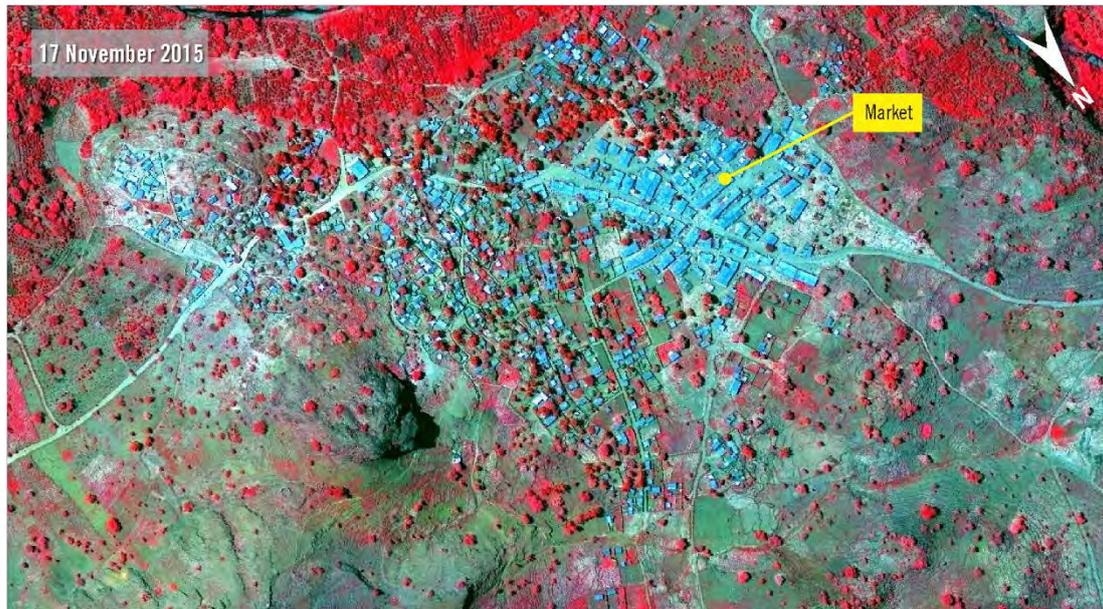
## 5.4.2 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS

Amnesty International interviewed 29 survivors of attacks in Central Jebel Marra, from Sorrong, Kilinje, Bourri, Kibily, Lugui, Dugo, Kairo, Kuldani, and Joh Kosteï.

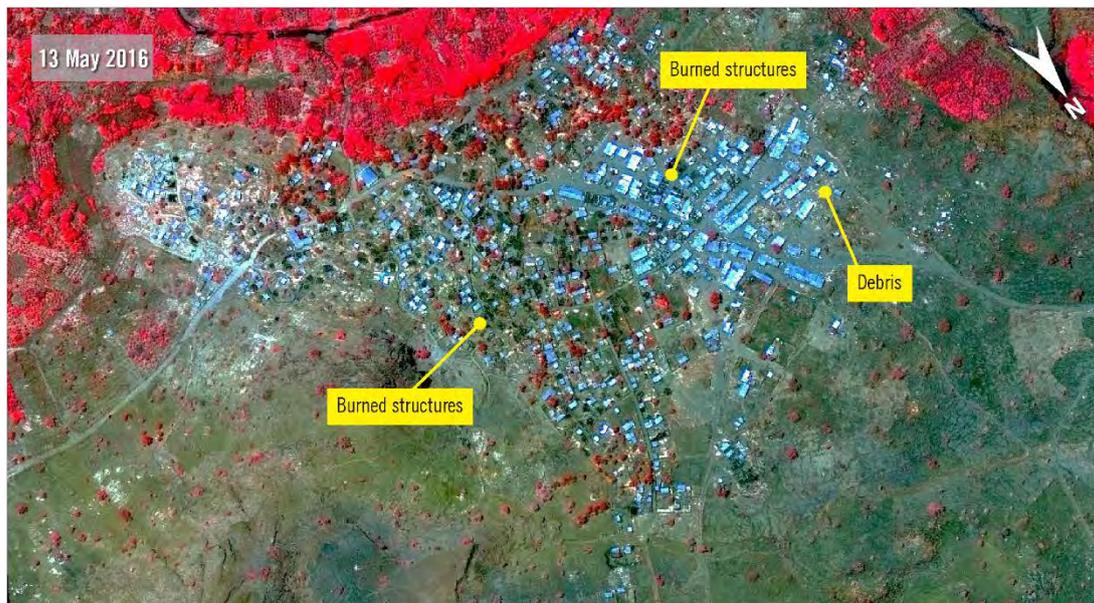
With the possible exception of Sorrong, SLA/AW fighters were reportedly not in the villages but were often engaged in heavy fighting in the areas between Golo and Sorrong and on the outskirts of some of the villages around Sorrong.<sup>187</sup>

All of the survivors were forced to flee their villages. Many had experienced severe physical violence. Most could identify civilians from their family or their village who were killed during the attacks. Many civilians fled to areas south of Sorrong, in the areas higher in the mountains.

### ATTACKS IN SARRONG



Sorrong town, 17 November 2015. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Sorrong town, 13 May 2016. ©DigitalGlobe, Inc.

<sup>187</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

Abdallah was in Sorrong on 10 and 11 April when the town was overrun by government forces. Abdallah was nearly killed by a bomb and then he and his wife were beaten and tortured in prison in Golo, where they had fled for safety.

**“I am a farmer. I had a garden with many orange trees... I was recently married. I was living with my wife in Sorrong... I was in [Sorrong] when it was attacked at night. During the night [of 10 April] there was a lot of bombing... I saw some people get hit by the bomb and die. But I couldn't recognize them because it was dark... Then [on 11 April] the government and the Janjaweed arrived. And there were a lot of aircrafts. ... Everyone ran in their own direction. Some of us ran to Golo... As we ran from Sorrong to Golo we saw a lot of dead bodies. I didn't recognize them. We found a woman with a baby on her back. Both of them were dead... We were running the whole day... When we arrived [in Golo] the government detained us. They accused me of being a rebel. They beat me and they kept me in detention for two days... My wife was detained with me. They beat both of us and deprived us of food and water for two days. On the first day they beat me with black sticks and pipes. On the second day they burned me with fire to get me to say that I was a rebel. They had an iron stick that they put in the fire and they burned me with it. And they shaved my wife's head. This was all done by government troops in the prison in Golo... Then one of the soldiers told [the other soldiers] to let us go. I think he did this because my wife was crying and because I did not confess after they burned me.”<sup>188</sup>**



Woman walking through Sorrong town, March 2015. ©Adriane Ohanesian

Nworrah, in her twenties, was also in Sorrong when it was attacked in April. She told Amnesty International how her husband and her four-year-old daughter were killed during the attack and how she found several small children alone in the bush after the attack.

**“I lost my husband in this conflict. He was shot and he died. We also lost everything in our house... At the beginning [of the attack] there was an airplane that started bombing. I was sleeping in my house [in Sorrong]. When the plane bombed we heard the sound and it was terrible. We couldn't sleep the rest of the night... When the [ground] attack started I was still in bed. It was about 5 in the morning... Then the Arabs on horses and camels showed up and started firing everywhere. There were even people on motorbikes... When they arrived we**

<sup>188</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

**ran away. We ran to a place called Dursa... I had two children. They killed one of them. I have one with me. My daughter was killed in Dursa. We were running and she fell behind. She could not run as fast. She [was shot and] fell down. When I turned around to get her she was dead.”<sup>189</sup>**

After her daughter was killed, Nworrah kept running with her other child, a small baby, on her back. She spent several days fleeing through the bush before ending up at the displaced persons camp outside of Jebel Marra. During this time, she, along with an old woman who fled with her from Dursa, found numerous unaccompanied small children and decided to take them with them. “We found some in the bush”, she said. “Some we found walking on the road. We arrived at the camp with 14 children that we found. Many of them are very sick.” One of the oldest children who arrived at the camp with Nworrah, Feye, an 11-year-old girl, told Amnesty International that her mother had been killed during the attack on Sorrong.<sup>190</sup>



Homes burned during an attack in Sorrong town, April 2016. ©Amnesty International

Anjummah, in her thirties, was also present in Sorrong when it was attacked in January and again in April.

**“The first attack was four months ago [in January]. It was from the air. Four weeks ago there was a bigger attack. Everyone ran away... They invaded the village and started beating me and arresting boys. My husband was arrested and I took the children. My [three-year-old] son was also arrested with my husband... I put some of my [other very young] children on our donkey and tried to leave... The attackers took my donkey and they left me with the [five] children and my younger sister, who is blind. I had to leave my sister. I ran with [some of] my children to a cave on Dursa mountain [south of Sorrong] and then to Kibily [a village further into the mountain, south of Sorrong] ... Then they bombed Kibily several times. I wanted to go back and get my sister but I couldn't because of the bombs... My older sister was also killed. She was killed with her six children. They were running to a cave and they were hit by a bomb. I saw their dead bodies but there was no time to bury them. We left them outside like they were.”**

Anjummah fled from Kibily with her family through the bush and managed to make it to a displaced persons camp outside of Jebel Marra. Anjummah does not know where her husband or her three-year-old son are. Anjummah provided the names of her brother, her father's sister, and three members of her extended family who were killed by bombs in Sorrong and Kilinje between the time of the initial attack in January and the attack in April.<sup>191</sup>

Assadiq, a 52-year-old man with nine children, was present inside Sorrong during the attack in April.

**“I was in my compound when the attack started. The bombing came first. Then the horses, and camels, and motorbikes. Then the tanks and the big trucks... Six of my family members were killed on that day. They were killed when a bomb fell on their compound. ... It fell at night... Their compound is about 100 meters from mine... I ran out of the village during the air attacks [with some of my family]. We went to a hill. The next**

<sup>189</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>190</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>191</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

morning, we saw the army arrive... My son was killed that morning. He was shot while trying to run out of the village.”<sup>192</sup>

### ATTACKS AROUND SARRONG

Suad, in her twenties, from Burro, a small village close to Sarrong, was in her compound when the village was attacked and her husband was killed.

**“Our village and other villages around Sarrong were all attacked and burned. It was Friday around 11 in the morning. My husband was shot in the head while we were in our house. He was shot by men in camouflage uniforms. My husband was a farmer. He had nothing to do with the rebels. [After he was shot] we fled from the village. I ran to a nearby brook... In the brook a bomb killed many people, men and women who were hiding. The people killed were from different villages. I saw the dead bodies... Then I ran to the hills and spent three nights hiding in a cave... Then I made my way through the bush to get to [this IDP camp]. On the way we were stopped by Janjaweed. They took my clothes and my shoes and they threatened to kill me. Many women were raped... I haven’t seen my children since the day of the attack.”<sup>193</sup>**

Taajah, in her twenties, from a small village east of Sarrong was in her village when it was attacked on a Friday in April.

**“Attackers came to our village. They killed people and looted. And the village was bombed... We fled to hills and hid in a cave. From the cave we could see many people get shot... While I was hiding in the cave I saw them get shot. And when we left the cave I saw the dead bodies. There were about twenty people.”**

Taajah provided the names of two men from her village whom she saw get shot and die. After she left the cave she made her way to an IDP camp. On her way to the camp she was stopped by people wearing military uniforms. They killed a man and his two sons who were travelling with her and a group of other people. The rest of the group fled to the hills.<sup>194</sup>

Hasienah, in her twenties, from Kibily, 4km southwest of Sarrong. She fled to a neighbouring village when Kibily was bombed in January, and then again when the village was bombed. Her house was destroyed by a bomb. She recalled being physically lifted up and thrown by the force of the bomb. She said that many people were killed by bombs in both villages; she provided the names of six individuals who were killed by bombs in Kibily.<sup>195</sup>

### ATTACKS AROUND GOLO

Abdulshakur, in his sixties, was in Bogotah, a village about a four hour walk east of Golo, when it was attacked. “We ran from the village because of the bombing” he said. “One bomb landed right inside the village... Some people lay down and a bomb landed on them. Three children and three adults were killed... Parts of their bodies were scattered by the bombs. We buried their [body parts] together.”<sup>196</sup>

Kattass, was present in Bourri, 6km southwest of Golo, when it was attacked:

**“I am from Bourri. We were in Bourri when it was attacked. We were bombed several times... Then people came on camels and horses and raped women and beat men... My father was shot and killed... I ran to the brook to hide... The men found me... I was raped by four men... they were all wearing khaki and they all had guns... And then my father was killed. He was shot dead by the attackers in Wadi Kerim ... and my children were killed by the heat and the lack of food. My two children and their cousin all died in [this IDP camp]. My cousin and I went to look for food. And when we came back at the end of the day they were dead.”<sup>197</sup>**

Barout, a teacher from Joh Kosteï, 2.5km east of Golo, said that Joh Kosteï was shelled in December and then attacked again by land in January.

**“...The village got a warning of a pending attack on 18 January and they fled to the bush... When we fled to the bush there was no water... The whole area was dependent on one well.... Eight children died from thirst... Also**

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<sup>192</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>193</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>194</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>195</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>196</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>197</sup> Amnesty International interview in April 2016.

several people died when they went to the one well... After three days, children started dying.”<sup>198</sup>



Joh Kostie village, March 2016. ©Adriane Ohanesian

Arjah, a traditional leader from Kuldani, 10km east of Golo, fled to an area deeper inside the mountains with a large group of people from his village and the surrounding villages. He provided the names of three civilians who were killed during the attack on Kuldani and names of 53 villages in the area that were attacked between 10 and 13 April. He also reported that smaller scale attacks were still ongoing in the area at the time Amnesty International interviewed him in late May. "We are surviving on the roots of the trees", he said.<sup>199</sup>

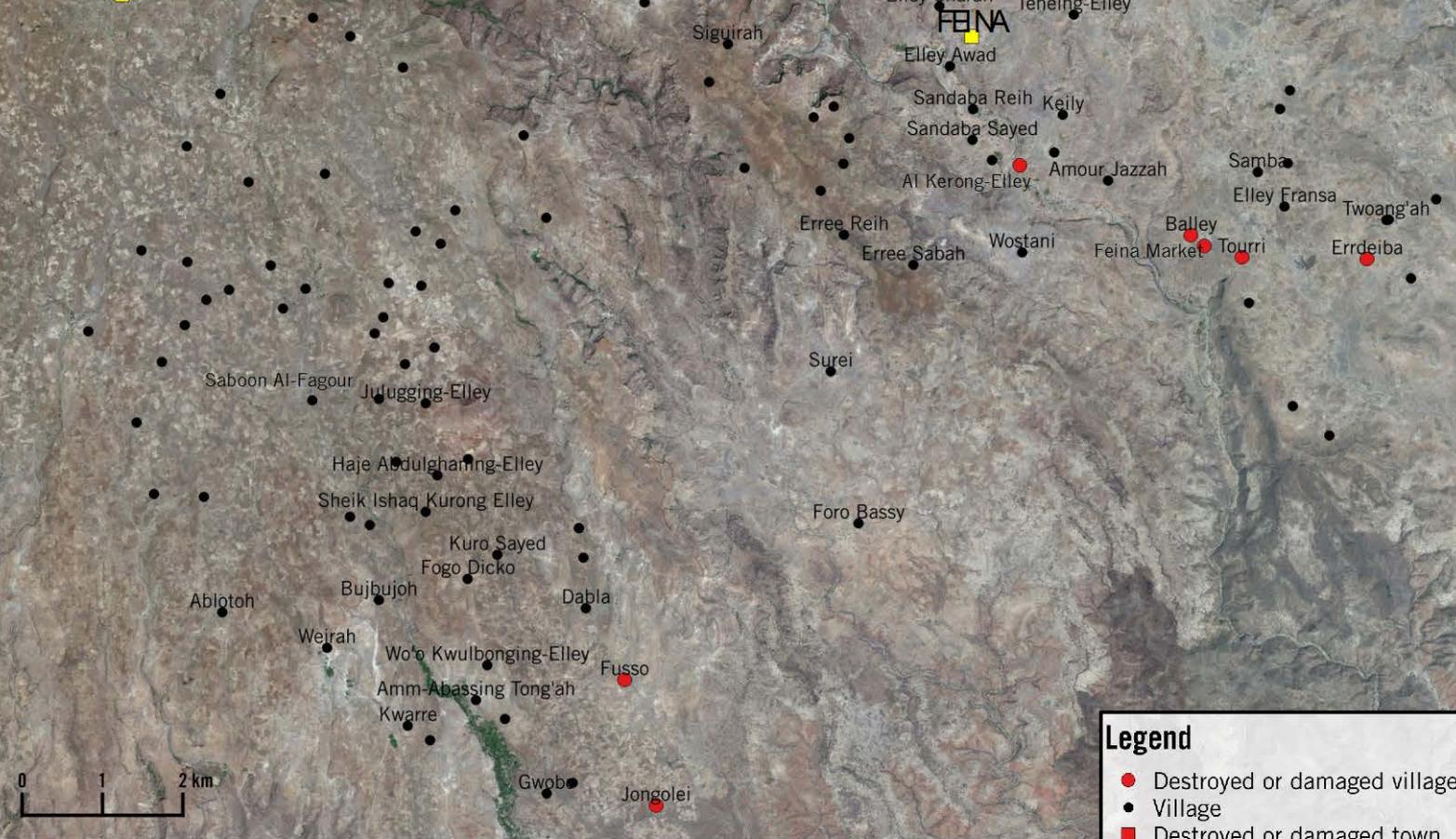
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<sup>198</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

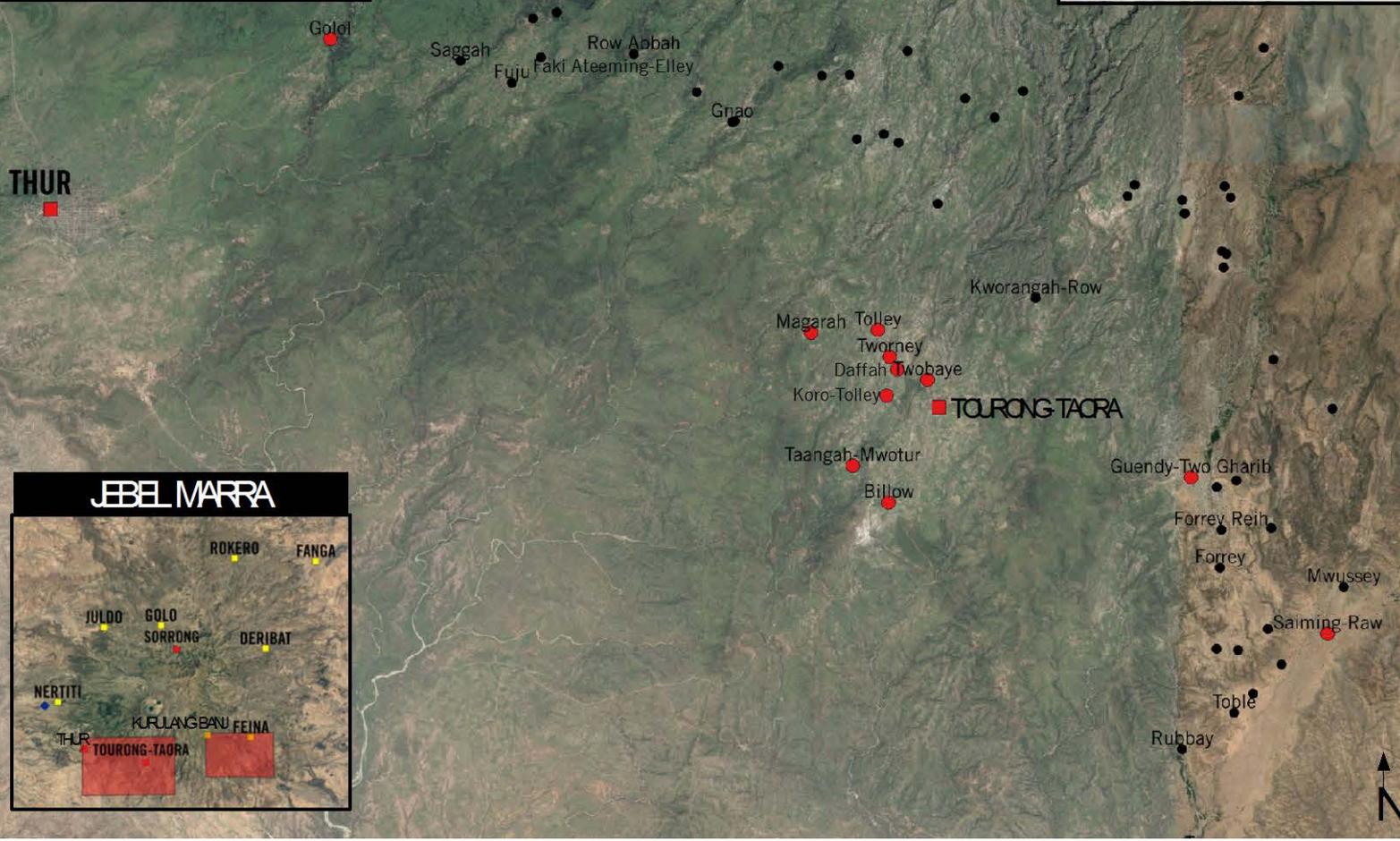
<sup>199</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

# Southeastern Jebel Marra

## KURULANG-BANJ



# Southwestern Jebel Marra



## 5.5 SOUTHERN JEBEL MARRA

### 5.5.1 SUMMARY OF ATTACKS

Between January and August government forces fought with the SLA/AW in multiple locations in southern Jebel Marra, including the areas around Kurulang-Banj, Tourong-Toara, and Feina.

Government forces attacked areas around Kurulang-Banj on 15 and 16 January, around Feina on 14 and 15 February, and around Tourong-Toara in mid-January, February, April, July, and August. The town of Thur was attacked by government-allied militia on 20 June.<sup>200</sup>

In each of these three areas, government and SLA/AW forces fought each other at strategic entrances to the areas: in Sandar Laffa, the entrance to Feina; in Karra, the entrance to Kurulang-Banj; and in Kalukidding, the entrance to Tourong-Toara. In all three battles the SLA/AW were initially defeated but subsequently regained control over certain parts of the lost territory.

The SLA/AW pushed the government forces out of the area around Kurulang-Banj after two days; however, survivors living in the area report that there has been intermittent bombing since the government forces retreated.<sup>201</sup> Government forces left the area of Feina after two days.

Government forces were pushed out of Tourong-Toara by the SLA/AW in late July, although the fighting around Tourong Toara also occurred in August.<sup>202</sup>

Most of the civilians displaced from the fighting in southern Jebel Marra have fled to IDP camps in Nyala, Kass, Thur, Nertiti.

Through the analysis of publicly available satellite imagery, Amnesty International was able to confirm that 20 villages in southern Jebel Marra were destroyed or damaged, including Tourong-Taora, Taangah-Mwotur, Billow, Guendy-Two Gharib, Saiming-Raw, Torray, Errdeiba, Thur, Balley, Al Kerong-Elley, Fusso, Koro-Kwoley, Twobaye, Daffah, Tworney, Magarah, Tolley, and Tourri. Feina market, the largest market in the area, was also attacked and heavily damaged.

Witnesses and human rights monitors provided Amnesty International with the names of numerous other villages that were attacked in southern Jebel Marra.

### 5.5.2 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS

Amnesty International spoke with 37 civilians who were present in Southern Jebel Marra during attacks on Kurulang-Banj, Feina market, Tourong-Toara, Golo, Thur, and Fujju.

Most of the survivors were forced to flee their homes as a result of the attack; however, several of those in the areas around Feina, Golol, and Kurulan-Banj were able to return. Many found their homes looted. Many experienced serious physical violence.

#### ATTACKS AROUND KURULANG-BANI

Amnesty International interviewed six survivors from the area around Kurulang-Banj.

Salima, in her forties, was in Kurulang-Banj when it was attacked.

**“We were attacked by Janjaweed on horses and camels and other groups [government allied militias] on motorbikes. And troops on trucks. And planes in the air... As we were running, when [the attackers] came across a man they would shoot him or beat him and say that he is a rebel. And the women were raped in the village and in the brooks... At the moment we were running, those on motorbikes, they arrested people and immediately started raping women. We hid in the same brook as they were raping women.... I didn't recognize the women. I was so scared. I couldn't concentrate to recognize [who was being raped]. And then the heavy weapons were**

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<sup>200</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document. S. Amnesty International interviews in June, July and August.

<sup>201</sup> Amnesty International interviews in July and August.

<sup>202</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

making a lot of noise... Then we kept running. We left the raped women in the brooks. They were not able to walk. We left a woman who had just delivered a baby under a tree. Her husband had been taken by the soldiers."<sup>203</sup>



Kurulang-banj town, 2008. ©Jérôme Tubiana

Saboon was also present in Kurulang-Banj during the attack. Saboon provided the names of five people killed in the attacks.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Amnesty International interview in April 2016.

<sup>204</sup> Amnesty International interview in June 2016.

## ATTACKS AROUND FEINA



Burned shops in Feina market, February 2016. ©Amnesty International

After government forces defeated the SLA/AW, they reportedly entered Feina Market and the adjacent towns of Balley and Tourri. Government forces immediately started to loot the market. A large number of people in the market were arrested and detained in the town's mosque.

Amnesty International spoke with 11 survivors and witnesses to attacks in the area of Feina.

Khatir, a farmer in his fifties, was among those who were arrested and detained in the mosque.

**“I was arrested and I was beaten. And they took everything that I had when they arrested me... They took me to the mosque [in Balley village]. They killed some people in front of us and forced us to bury the bodies. They kept us inside until the next morning, then they left... Men and women were beaten... Women were periodically taken out of the mosque and brought back several hours later.”<sup>205</sup>**

Musa, a merchant in his forties, was detained in the mosque at the time of the attack. He told Amnesty International that he is disabled and could not run away. Some of the attackers, whom he recognized because they used to be his customers years before, found him, started to insult him, and beat him with sticks and the butts of their guns. “I am handicapped so I couldn't run away... When I saw them coming I buried my money and I resigned ...to my fate. At night they told us to stay in the mosque”, he said. A man that Musa knew personally was shot in front of him by a government commander, whom he also knew personally. “They asked him to give them his money and he said ‘I don't have money’... it was right in front of me. He was walking. They were shouting at him. He was walking and they shot him twice in the back through the chest. He died.”<sup>206</sup>

Musa, Khatir, and the other people in the mosque were addressed by an RSF commander whom they identified by name. They both gave Amnesty International very similar accounts of his speech. The commander told all the villagers that this was no longer their land, that everyone in the area would be considered rebels, and that anyone who wanted to be safe must go to Nyala. He said that he had orders to burn, loot, and kill.<sup>207</sup>

Musa and Khatir provided the names of 21 individuals who were killed during the attack on Feina market and in the surrounding villages, including several old women who were burned in their huts.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>206</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>207</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>208</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

Mwurmwur, a school teacher from the Feina area, returned to his school after the attack to find that all of the school supplies had been looted.<sup>209</sup>

## ATTACKS AROUND TOURONG-TAORA



Tourong-Taora Town, 2008. ©Jérôme Tubiana

Jamyah, in her twenties, was inside Tourong-Taora when it was attacked.

**“We were in our village when it was attacked... It started with bombing. After the bombing stopped the attackers came on horses... We fled during the night. We couldn’t take anything with us. They shelled us. There was an old woman who was running with us. She was hit and cut into two pieces by the bomb. This was inside the village. I was just a few meters away... Then we ran to the hills. And then we walked to Thur. In Thur we begged people to take us to [this town].”<sup>210</sup>**

Bakhieta, in her twenties, was in Tourong-Taora when it was attacked. She told Amnesty International how several members of her family were killed during the attack and she witnessed a group of 15 residents executed while they fled from the village.

**“The village was attacked a few days ago. I lost my brother. He was killed by the fighting... They attacked us with bombs. And on trucks... My father was also slaughtered and no one was able to bury him. My father and brother were killed during the same attack. While we were running out of the village they arrested them and slaughtered them. The attackers found us on the road, they arrested them and slaughtered them with a knife. I saw it with my own eyes... I have only one child now... My other child was killed... He was a boy, five years old. They took him from me on the road while we were coming [to Nertiti]. He was shot in front of me. 15 other people were shot too. They were arrested and ordered to lie down on their stomachs. And then they were shot. Men, children, and women... I could see them being shot while I was hiding in the brook... Many women were raped [while we were fleeing]. If they resisted they were beaten... I was raped [on the road between Tourong-Taora and Nertiti].”**

Bakhieta provided the names of her five family members who were killed.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>210</sup> Amnesty International interview in April 2016.

<sup>211</sup> Amnesty International interview in April 2016.

## ATTACKS IN THUR



People displaced by violence in Thur, June 2016.  
©Amnesty International



Destroyed home in Thur town, June 2016.  
©Amnesty International

The town of Thur is situated at the southern edge of Jebel Marra. There is a government battalion stationed immediately to the southwest of the town, and a UNAMID base nearby. On 20 and 21 June 2016, Thur was attacked by government-allied militia, whose members had participated in the offensive in southern Jebel Marra between January and May. The incident was allegedly in response to cattle raiding by members of the SLA/AW.<sup>212</sup> According to OCHA, 17,000 people were displaced as result of the attack.<sup>213</sup>

Amnesty International spoke with three people present in Thur on the day of the attack who provided the names of five civilians killed during the attack.

UNAMID, along with the government commissioner from Nertiti visited the town while the attackers were still present and looting the village. “The commissioner and UNAMID did nothing”, said Souleyman, a traditional leader displaced into the town from violence in southern Jebel Marra in January. “They allowed them to keep looting.”

Essein, a resident of Thur in his thirties, said, “my house was looted... hundreds of shops and compounds were burned down... the government soldiers did not provide protection... Then the commissioner [from Nertiti] came [and addressed some people in the town who had gathered at the military base]. We asked him to return our goods [which they could see in plain sight piled on the tops of vehicles inside the town] he ordered the soldiers not to shoot the attackers. And he took guns away from the Fur policemen.”<sup>214</sup>

Witnesses provided Amnesty International with the names of five people killed during the attack in Thur on 20 and 21 June.

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<sup>212</sup> Unclassified UN-restricted document.

<sup>213</sup> UN OCHA, “Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan,” Issue 26, 20-26 June 2016, available at [reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA\\_Sudan\\_Weekly\\_Humanitarian\\_Bulletin\\_Issue\\_26\\_%2820\\_-\\_26\\_June\\_2016%29.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA_Sudan_Weekly_Humanitarian_Bulletin_Issue_26_%2820_-_26_June_2016%29.pdf)

<sup>214</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.



Bodies of people killed by violence in Thur, June 2016. ©Amnesty International

# 6. CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACKS

## 6.1.1 OVERVIEW OF ALLEGED CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACKS

To provide an exact identification of the specific chemical agents allegedly used in the attacks documented in this report requires the collection of environmental samples and physiological samples from those directly or indirectly exposed to the alleged chemical agents as well as an analysis of weapon remnants used during the attacks. Given that access to Jebel Marra is severely restricted, it was not possible for Amnesty International to obtain such samples. However, photographic and testimonial evidence was analysed by two independent chemical weapons experts who found that there was credible evidence to strongly suggest that chemical weapons agents were used in the attacks documented in this report.

Amnesty International interviewed 57 residents of Jebel Marra, 47 civilians and ten members of SLA/AW, who alleged that Sudanese government forces utilized “poisonous smoke” during attacks in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016. These individuals provided Amnesty International with substantial testimonial and photographic evidence in support of the allegations. The evidence collected from the attacks was broadly consistent and strongly suggests that Sudanese government forces repeatedly used chemical weapons during attacks in Jebel Marra. The residents included survivors and people who care for survivors and victims. Several of the survivors were also caregivers. Many of the survivors witnessed multiple attacks.

Based on testimony from caregivers and survivors, Amnesty International estimates that between 200 and 250 people may have died as a result of exposure to the chemical weapons agents, with many – or most – being children. Caregivers also provided Amnesty with what they observed to be the proximate cause of death.

Amnesty International documented 32 suspected chemical weapons attacks in Jebel Marra between January and September 2016. The earliest attacks occurred during the start of the government’s offensive in mid-January; the last attack Amnesty documented occurred on 9 September.

The alleged chemical weapons attacks took place in each of the four areas in Jebel Marra that experienced major violence in 2016. Amnesty International documented suspected chemical weapons attacks in northern Jebel Marra in January, in southern Jebel Marra in from January through September, in central Jebel Marra from April through September, and in western Jebel Marra from January to September.

The chemical weapons agents were reportedly delivered by both bombs and by rockets. A majority of survivors of alleged chemical weapons attacks reported that the chemical weapons agents were discharged from a bomb dropped from an Antonov airplane. A minority reported that they were released from rockets fired from the ground. Four survivors said that they witnessed the alleged chemical weapons agents being discharged from both bombs and rockets.

Many of the survivors told Amnesty International that the bombs which delivered the alleged chemical weapons agents exploded upon contact with the ground and subsequently released a thick cloud of smoke. Many of the survivors reported that the bomb which delivered the alleged chemical weapons agents exploded in mid-air, that the explosion was usually preceded by a bright flame or a flash of light, and that after the bomb exploded, it released a cloud of smoke or dust which proceeded to spread out over a large

area and descend towards the ground. Several survivors reported that they had witnessed the alleged chemical weapons agents being released from both types of bombs during different attacks.

The vast majority of survivors reported that the smoke released from the bombs and rockets that contained alleged chemical weapons agents changed colour after it was discharged. A small minority reported that the smoke was black and then disappeared. Of those who reported that the smoke changed in colour, nearly all stated that the smoke started off very dark, usually black, and then proceeded to get lighter in colour until it turned grey/white. Several witnesses reported that it changed from black to blue or purple before turning to grey or white. Several witnesses reported that it changed from black to red or maroon and then to grey or white. Yellow and green smoke was also reported by a few witnesses. Nearly all witnesses reported that it took between five and 20 minutes for the smoke to change colour and then dissipate into the atmosphere.

Many survivors reported that the alleged chemical weapons agents that were released from bombs left a thick coat of black dust on the ground, trees, grass, and human beings in the vicinity.

Every survivor said that the smoke smelled noxious. Many were unable to articulate the smell beyond the fact that they found it intensely disagreeable; witnesses often said that they had never experienced anything like it before or that it was “unnatural.” Several survivors described that smell as putrid or musty. Several described it as “rotten”, “like rotten eggs”, “hot”, or “hot like pepper”, or some combination thereof. Four survivors described the smell as similar to an insecticide or chlorine or sulphide.

Several survivors reported seeing the colour of water in *wadis* change after bombs containing the alleged chemical weapons landed in the *wadi*.<sup>215</sup>

Several survivors said that large numbers of birds and other animals, including donkeys, died after coming into contact with the alleged chemical weapons agents.

Survivors and caregivers described a wide variety of ailments that victims of alleged chemical weapons attacks experienced during the hours and days after exposure to the alleged chemical weapons agents. In general, children were more severely affected than adults.

The vast majority of survivors of the suspected chemical weapons attacks have visited no formal medical clinics and had no access to adequate medical care.

Two of the most common symptoms, which the vast majority of survivors reported experiencing, and which the caregivers almost always reported observing in all of the people they were treating, were gastrointestinal: very severe, often bloody, vomiting and diarrhoea. Vomiting and diarrhoea both commenced very soon after exposure, with most survivors stating that they commenced immediately or within 30 minutes. According to the caregivers, the diarrhoea did not respond to the antibiotics which they normally used to treat diarrhoea. Diarrhoea and vomiting were among the most common symptoms and caused death in numerous instances according to survivors and caregivers.

Survivors and caregivers reported a variety of changes to skin. The changes included severe blisters, rashes, and itchiness. The victims' skin reportedly hardened, changed colour to white, black, or green, and subsequently fell off. Changes to the skin often occurred very soon after exposure, normally within an hour; however, many caregivers reported that changes to the skin occurred the following day.

Caregivers frequently observed changes to the victims' eyes, including changes to eye colour, bulging eyes, constant discharge of liquid from the eyes, constant itchiness, spots under the eyelids, and a reduction in vision. Several survivors lost their vision.

Survivors and caregivers reported a variety of respiratory problems that occurred shortly after exposure to the alleged chemical weapons agents, including severe coughing, difficulty breathing, and lung infections. Suffocation was among the most common causes of death for victims of the alleged chemical weapons attacks.

Miscarriages among those exposed were commonly reported by witnesses and caregivers; hundreds of miscarriages were reported, which were often much bloodier than normal. The miscarriages reportedly occurred either on the same day or within a few days of the exposure to the alleged chemical weapons agent.

Survivors and caregivers reported dramatic changes to the smell of the breath of people exposed to the suspected chemical weapons agents. The smell of the breath was always reported to be extraordinarily disagreeable and often characterized as unnatural.

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<sup>215</sup> A *wadi* is a riverbed that is dry except during the rainy season.

Many victims and nearly all caregivers reported dramatic changes to the colour of urine, usually to yellow/orange and then to red/maroon. They also reported that the smell of the urine changed significantly. Caregivers also reported changes in the colour and smell of their patients' stool.

Caregivers and survivors often reported that bodies, particularly of children, were swollen.

Caregivers and parents of child survivors reported that children experienced a substantial loss in appetite after being exposed to the alleged chemical weapons agents. Several children reportedly refused to eat after being exposed and died. Several adult survivors also reported experiencing a loss of appetite in the aftermath of an attack.

Several survivors reported that their young children experienced a regression in their motor functions and mental capabilities after exposure to the alleged chemical weapons agents, including an inability to walk or speak despite having previously been able to do so.

Numerous victims were reportedly rendered unconscious as a result of exposure to the chemical weapons agent. Many victims experienced involuntary muscle contractions and had seizures. Most of the people who had seizures subsequently died.

## 6.1.2 ANALYSIS FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS EXPERTS

Amnesty International asked two chemical weapons experts, to review the clinical signs and symptoms revealed by the photographic and video evidence and the interview notes. Both are respected experts with experience in unconventional munitions, including biological and chemical warfare agents, and experience in the diagnosis of exposure to chemical weapons agents.

After reviewing the testimonial and visual evidence, one expert stated.

“I conclude that the clinical signs and symptoms of many of the victims are most consistent with their being exposed to a chemical substance capable of causing blisters (vesicles) and similar lesions. There is a class of chemical-warfare agents called vesicant or blister agents; this class includes sulphur mustard (the most commonly employed), nitrogen mustards (mostly used today in industry and medicine), Lewisite, and phosgene oxime. Victims exposed to one or more of these chemical-agent vesicants might exhibit many of these same signs and symptoms.

Many of the observations reported by the interviewees, however, are not those we normally associate with exposure to chemical-agent vesicants. Thus I cannot rule out the possibility that victims of these attacks have been exposed to a combination of other chemicals instead of or in addition to blister agents. These other chemicals might include riot-control agents in very high concentrations, hydrogen sulphide gas, heavy metal poisons, biological toxins, strong inorganic acids and bases, and other corrosive chemicals. The frequently seen pattern of scattered individual circular lesions also suggests either spatter from hot liquid (which could also be responsible for the extensive skin denudation in some areas with marked sparing of other areas) or else an infectious process. The most commonly reported clinical signs and symptoms however are not consistent with spatter of hot liquids. More specific identification of any chemicals involved in these attacks must await more detailed analysis of tissue samples recovered from the victims and from soil samples in areas near the sites of the attacks. But it seems very clear, based upon the environmental descriptions of the attacks, the photographic evidence coupled with the reported clinical signs and symptoms, and after extensive discussions with medical doctors familiar with injuries caused by exposure to chemical and biological warfare agents that the wounds of these victims are not due simply to the effects of conventional explosive or incendiary weapons of war.”

After reviewing the testimonial and visual evidence, one expert stated.

“Victims experienced a variety of symptoms that appear to be the result of chemical exposures. Much of the photographic and testimonial evidence is consistent with vesicant, or blister agent, exposure. Agents in this class include sulphur mustard, lewisite, and nitrogen mustard. Evidence that supports vesicant exposure includes: deep circular lesions often appearing in groups, blisters described as having formed several hours after exposure, facial edema or swelling, hyperpigmentation surrounding some lesions with areas of hypopigmentation, and blister distribution around warm and moist areas such as the buttocks and groin. It is of note that the lesions on victims' bodies are described as being difficult or impossible to treat and many of the photographed wounds appear infected. Some wounds were described as not healing. Vesicants inhibit activities of the immune system and so secondary infection of blister wounds is common, especially without appropriate antibiotic therapy, and lesions are usually slow to heal. Some select biological toxins can also cause similar symptoms and should not be ruled out. For example, T-2 trichothecene mycotoxin, historically

known as “yellow rain,” can cause symptoms similar to those seen in Jebel Marra including vomiting, diarrhoea, itching, rash, blisters, conjunctivitis, coughing, and other respiratory ailments. Severe exposure to other chemicals, such as pesticides and tear gas, can also cause blister formation and some of the other observed symptoms, so it is imperative that clinical specimens and environmental samples be analysed to positively identify the agent of exposure. Without these tests, it is not possible to definitively attribute these symptoms to any specific chemical. Other symptoms that were frequently described include changes in urine colour and odour on breath and faces. These symptoms are indicative of arsenic exposure. Lewisite is an arsenic-containing vesicant, so it is possible that these symptoms were caused by lewisite, potentially mixed with sulphur mustard. Arsenical pesticides, among other arsenic-containing chemicals, can also cause these symptoms and should not be ruled out. Again, confirmation of exposures through laboratory testing is required to positively identify arsenic exposure.

Not all symptoms and testimonials are consistent with vesicant exposure. For example, some interviewees described an odour of rotten eggs which indicates the presence of a sulphur-containing chemical such as sulphur dioxide or hydrogen sulphide. Sulphur dioxide can produce some exposure symptoms that were observed in Sudan and should not be ruled out. Hydrogen sulphide, however, is not likely to cause these symptoms.

Because testimonial and photographic evidence is not necessarily consistent with exposure to a single chemical, it is possible that victims were exposed to different chemicals during different times or to a combination of chemicals. Regardless of the specific chemical of exposure, it is evident that chemical exposure occurred. Positive identification of the agent of exposure can only be made through laboratory testing of victim specimens and environmental samples. These specimens and samples should be collected as quickly as possible as these agents, and biomarkers of their exposure, can only be detected for a limited amount of time.”



This victim's right arm shows large circular lesions with some scarring. The top layer of skin from one of the wounds has come off showing healing skin. These wounds appear to be healing normally. There are also pimple-like nodules seen between these scars, and there is a linear scar on the top of the hand near the wrist. This photo was taken two weeks after exposure. The circular nature of these lesions is consistent with healing blisters that might be observed after exposure to a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) such as sulphur mustard. These wounds are atypical in some ways for blister agents and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



This victim has circular lesions with raised edges and central depressions on the leg, lower back and especially the buttocks. Some of these appear pink or red. Some of the elongated lesions may be due to the merging of two or more circular lesions or may be due to other causes, including trauma from wound cleaning. The circular nature of these lesions and the location of the lesions, on regions of the body that are warm and moist such as the buttocks, is consistent with exposure to chemical warfare blister agents (vesicants) like sulphur mustard. These wounds are atypical in some ways for blister agents and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



A close-up of a victim's buttocks and upper legs reveals ring-shaped lesions with raised edges, possibly from swelling or infection, and centers that are depressed. Some seem undisturbed, but the red color of others may indicate further trauma, perhaps from inadequate treatment. One lesion is visible on the side of the victim's right leg showing jagged skin at the edge of the wound. These lesions could have formed from blisters that popped. The shape and location of these lesions is consistent with exposure to chemical warfare blister agents (vesicants) like sulphur mustard. These wounds are atypical in some ways for blister agents and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The outer part of the forearm shows three small circular lesions. These may be covered with a tan crust and some show evidence of pink healing skin. It is possible that these lesions were caused by a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) like sulphur mustard, but the size is not consistent with such agents. These wounds are atypical in some ways for blister agents and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The buttocks and upper back show multiple circular lesions that are sometimes touching. Their centers are often red and one appears to be bleeding. The circular shape and location of these lesions is consistent with exposure to chemical warfare blister agents (vesicants) like sulphur mustard. These wounds are atypical in some ways for blister agents and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



This victim has large areas of dark red skin and in some areas the outer layer of skin has sloughed off. These areas are adjacent to areas of unaffected skin. The pink mottling in some of the dark areas may be a current wound or may be scars. The victim's wounds were described as itchy, so some of the pink mottling could also be due to scratching resulting in removal of dead skin. Additionally, many causes of extreme trauma to the skin, such as exposure to high concentrations of a chemical warfare blister agent like sulphur mustard, can lead to skin sloughing. Some subtle aspects of the sloughing seen here may be atypical of blister agent exposure and indicate that exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals could be responsible. Without further examination, it is not possible to attribute these wounds to any particular chemical, though these wounds are not consistent with wounds caused by conventional weapons. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The buttocks and the back of the leg show very dark discoloration consistent with a dead outer layer of skin which has sloughed off most of the buttocks to reveal new skin underneath. Many chemicals can cause this type of necrosis. These lesions could have been caused by a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) such as sulphur mustard but they are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. These wounds are not consistent with exposure to conventional weapons. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The buttocks of this victim show large often dimpled lesions. Pimple-like nodules are scattered on the upper thighs. These wounds are not in a pattern typically associated with exposure to a blistering agent, however the victim's wounds were described as blisters that developed over the course of a week and that the buttocks were covered by clothing during exposure. These statements indicate that the victim was exposed to a chemical or biological toxin. These lesions could have been caused by a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) such as sulphur mustard but they are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The skin of this victim's back shows multiple circular wounds that appear to be from freshly popped blisters revealing fresh pink skin. The outer layer of skin is visible surrounding some of these wounds. A colored liquid is visible on the skin and appears to be coming from the wounds. This liquid is either coming from another lesion or perhaps applied as a treatment. Smaller blisters appear to be present surrounding the leftmost wound. These circular wounds appear to be from blisters and are consistent with exposure to a chemical warfare blister agent such as sulphur mustard. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The lower right calf shows a large ulcerated lesion that appears to be swollen and infected. Swelling surrounding the wound is consistent with a severe infection. This wound was described as forming entirely from poisoning and not from a conventional weapon. The photo was taken five days after exposure. This lesion could have been caused by a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) such as sulphur mustard but is atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals, including corrosive chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



This photo was taken of a victim who had walked through an area that was bombed. The sole of the right foot shows two lesions. One is oval with smooth edges to which strands of cotton can be seen adhering. The other circular wound has a red base and clear edges to which are attached residual traces of skin. These wounds are consistent with exposure to a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) such as sulphur mustard but they are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



On the top of the second toe of the left foot is an irregularly shaped ulceration with a red base. There is swelling next to this lesion. The lesion was described as having formed after exposure to "smoke" and not from an "injury." This lesion could have been caused by a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) such as sulphur mustard but it is atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure. Swelling of the toes, along with the lesion, indicates that the wound may have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



A roughly circular lesion shows a deep uniformly pink base with a central cavity. This victim was described as having walked through an area that was bombed. This wound, although circular, is very deep and not consistent with vesicant exposure. However, jagged skin surrounding the wound is suggestive of blister formation. These wounds are consistent with exposure to a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) such as sulphur mustard but they are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The most predominant feature seen on this victim is extensive sloughing off of the outer layer of the skin adjacent to areas of apparently unaffected skin. This photograph was taken at least one week after exposure. The victim was described as wearing clothing when exposed, so these wounds are likely chemical in nature. Exposure to high concentrations of a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) like sulphur mustard, and other forms of extreme skin trauma, can lead to skin sloughing. Some subtle aspects of the sloughing seen here may be atypical of blister agent exposure and indicate that exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals could be responsible. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The right side of the patient in this photo shows where the outer layer of the skin has sloughed off forming sharp borders of apparently unaffected skin. This photograph was taken about one month after the attack. Skin sloughing began approximately two weeks after the attack. Exposure to high concentrations of a chemical warfare blister agent like sulphur mustard, and other forms of extreme skin trauma, can lead to skin sloughing. Some subtle aspects of the sloughing seen here may be atypical of blister agent exposure and indicate that exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals could be responsible. 2016 ©Amnesty International



The skin of the left palm shows a circular lesion with a tan apparent crust in the center and with a raised border. The edges of the lesion are not well-defined, and skin-surface irregularities and discoloration are evident at the periphery of the lesion. The underside of the left middle finger shows a similar circular lesion with raised tan edges and a depressed center. The tip of the left fourth (ring) finger shows tan-green discoloration similar to that of the other lesions. These wounds were obtained after the victim touched shrapnel resulting in blister formation and are consistent with exposure to chemical warfare blistering agents (vesicants) such as sulphur mustard. However, the wounds are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



There are several small circular lesions scattered across the buttocks of this victim. The tan to yellow color of the smallest ones indicates that they may contain pus. The others are pimple-like. The few white ones may represent various healing stages of these lesions. These lesions could have been caused by a chemical warfare blister agent (vesicant) like sulphur mustard but are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals, combination of chemicals, biological toxins, or even to infectious agents. 2016 ©Amnesty International



On the forehead, above the right eye, is a brown, slightly raised, circular lesion with a well-defined border. Similar lesions, green in color, are seen on the scalp. These may have been blisters. There are other small pimple-like lesions present. The face, including the eyes and lips, are swollen. This baby was born on the same day that attacks occurred and developed blisters two days later. These injuries are consistent with exposure to chemical warfare blistering agents (vesicants) such as sulphur mustard. However, the wounds are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals or a combination of chemicals. 2016 ©Amnesty International



A large elevated circular tan-green lesion with well-defined borders is surrounded by smaller lesions in an irregular, satellite pattern. These wounds were described as blisters and may have become infected. The wounds are consistent with exposure to chemical warfare blistering agents (vesicants) such as sulphur mustard. However, the wounds are atypical in some ways for that kind of exposure and might have been caused by exposure to other chemicals, combination of chemicals, of biological toxins. These lesions are not consistent with a conventional weapon wound. 2016 ©Amnesty International

## 6.1.3 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS AND CAREGIVERS IN WESTERN JEBEL MARRA

Amnesty International interviewed 6 survivors of alleged chemical weapons attacks in western Jebel Marra. Amnesty International also interviewed caregivers who had treated victims of alleged chemical weapons attacks in Jebel Marra. Two of the caregivers were also survivors. Amnesty International also interviewed five members of SLA/AW who survived alleged chemical weapons attacks.

### CAREGIVERS

Jamous, told Amnesty International that he cared for more than 60 people for ailments that he believes were caused by exposure to chemical weapons during attacks between January and September. Jamous fled from his village after it was destroyed by government forces in January. He relocated to another village that had not been affected by a land attack.

**“I ran away from my village... I ran further east, higher in the mountain... [since the attacks started] I have treated a lot of people... Just today [on 17 June] I received four new people... Even now I have some victims at my home... Some of them have wounds from shrapnel... and there are cases of poison. And the medicine we have can't treat [the poison cases]. Most of them they are suffering and then they die... Their skin turns dark and becomes harder... They experience a harsh coughing... They are constantly itching... It affects their eyes. It causes eye infections. But the eye infection medicine does not work... The eyes become extremely red. And liquid is always running from the eyes... Some have ear infections... Sometimes they have fever but they don't have malaria... Victims say that the smoke caused them to vomit and be nauseous immediately.”**

Amnesty International interviewed Jamous again in July to follow up on the first interview and to discuss the people he had cared for recently.

**“[The person I am caring for now, his urine] changes colour to red... It's not blood but the colour is red... During the past month I treated 15 people whose urine changed like this... Also, sometimes it changes to a yellow/orange mix... People are coughing until they can't breathe... Their breath is hot and it is abnormal... Some patients' breath becomes very nasty. They didn't mention this but I noticed the bad smell... I can't describe it... I can't find something like it in the natural world, nothing smells bad like that.”**

Amnesty International interviewed Jamous again in mid-August and he said that there had just been an attack [near where he was living] ... He said that he was treating several survivors from the attack who developed blisters two days after the attack. The blisters had now turned into wounds.<sup>216</sup>

Jamous gave Amnesty International a list of 27 people who died in his care after being exposed to suspected chemical weapons. He also provided what he believed to be the proximate cause of their deaths, which was most commonly diarrhoea, coughing, and bloody vomiting, or some combination of the three. The fatal cases included a five-day-old baby boy born with rashes all over his body and a three-day-old baby boy who was vomiting blood and died.<sup>217</sup>

Hassan, told Amnesty International that he treated numerous people for ailments that he believes were caused by exposure to chemical weapons. Hassan described the most common symptoms, including many which he said he had never seen before.

**“The main thing that the victims complain about is the bombing with the poison... The poison comes from some bombs, not all bombs... It causes lung infections... it causes lots of coughing. Victims are always coughing... It also causes eye infections... And vomiting and diarrhoea... When shrapnel hits the body it causes blisters... but it is mostly the smoke that causes the problems... The smoke changes the colour of skin to white. And sometimes the skin becomes rotten and I am compelled to cut away the rotting part... The smoke also causes pimples on the body... And children's eyes become swollen... White water is coming out of their eyes... Sometimes [the white water] is like tears but sometimes it's different than tears, more white... Pregnant women have had miscarriages [after being exposed to the smoke]. I have treated [many] ... the women [who have the**

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<sup>216</sup> Amnesty International interview in June 2016.

<sup>217</sup> Amnesty International interviews in June, July, August, and September 2016.



Remnants of bombs that fell in western Jebel Marra and allegedly released chemical weapons agents, 2016. ©Amnesty International

**miscarriages] are bleeding a lot... Elderly patients have pain in their joints, in a way that wasn't common before."**

Amnesty International interviewed Hassan again and he gave additional description of symptoms.

**"There are changes to victims' urine. It becomes yellow/orange and then red... In some people it is already red when I see them... The urine changes colour over several days... The urine sometimes smells rotten, sometimes like bile<sup>218</sup> ... sometimes when you give them medicine it changes back [to its original colour] ... Their breath smells very bad. It smells like rotten meat... [The breath] smells different than the urine... Some people's eyes change colour to yellow, some change to red/brown... The white part of the eyes changes to red/brown... The eyes are not normal... sometimes the eyes get better, sometimes they do not... The blood pressure is often very high... Almost everyone suffers from severe headaches, which do not go away with paracetamol... I have seen nine people who had seizures... they were shaking like they had epilepsy. Four of them died."**

Hassan told Amnesty International that he personally observed the alleged chemical weapons several times.

**"[The smoke] has a very bad smell... [The smoke] is dark black right after it explodes then it turns white. It turns grey and then it turns white... this takes about 20 minutes... I saw it in the areas of Kutrum, Kwila, Kude, and Buri... One bomb fell by water and turned water completely red... some bombs changed the colour of the water."<sup>219</sup>**

Djaffar, cared for numerous children exposed to alleged chemical weapons. In mid-June seven children under his care died from ailments that he believes were caused by exposure to chemical weapons. He said that their skin changed colour, hardened, and developed wounds. He also said that they developed a severe form of diarrhoea, which would not respond to conventional treatment. He also said that he has treated many children who refused to eat after being exposed to the smoke.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>218</sup> Amnesty International interviews in July, August, and September 2016.

<sup>219</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>220</sup> Amnesty International interviews in June, July, August, and September.

## CIVILIAN VICTIMS

Wahab, a man in his fifties, told Amnesty International that he was in Tarmah village in west Jebel Marra, in June, when he was injured during a chemical weapons attack. A bomb landed just a few meters from where he was walking.

**“I was injured on my leg. My leg was almost cut away by parts of the bomb that were just like a knife... I have also suffered from inhaling poisonous air... When the bomb exploded I inhaled the poisonous air, which I am smelling even now... Immediately [after the explosion] I vomited a lot... My skin has become hard and dark, like it was burned... like this over some parts of the body, especially on the injured part.”**

Wahab requested to stop the interview before it was finished. “I am in too much pain to continue speaking”, he said. Wahab provided the names of man and a woman who were killed during the same attack.<sup>221</sup>

Kalthoma, in her thirties, was at home in Burro, south of Juldo, when it was attacked in January or February. Kalthoma said that she saw several bombs discharge black smoke, which then turned blue. Her children became sick after being exposed to the smoke.

**“The attackers came on horseback and camelback, and on motorbikes... I was in the village when they came and opened fire. Then I ran towards the *wadi* and I came across attackers and they beat me with a whip... and they sent me back to the village... Then I ran to the hills... Several bombs fell around the village and in the hills where we were hiding... Most of my kids are sick from the smoke of the bombardment... They got sick on the day of the attack... They vomited and they had diarrhoea... They were coughing a lot... Their skin turned dark like it was burned... [Six months later] they are a little better. They were given some medicine.”<sup>222</sup>**

Haigah, in her twenties, was in Korrow when it was attacked in January. She told Amnesty International how she fled Korrow and arrived in Elley Fottah where she was injured by shrapnel and she and her baby became sick from the bomb's smoke.

**“The attackers came by land... they found me in my compound. They fired [their guns] on the village... there was bombardment... I left my house barefoot without taking anything... We ran while they were shooting and bombing ... I got two wounds from the shrapnel... My [five] children are young ... some of them weren't able to walk... I suffered to carry them... We ran from Korrow to Teiney [Soam]... the attackers chased us [from Teiney Soam] to Baringo... and then to Elley Fottah [southeast of Juldo] ... in Elley Fottah the shrapnel from a bomb injured me and the baby I was carrying on my back was thrown away by the force of the bomb... [eventually] we arrived in [this town outside of Jebel Marra].”**

Haigah told Amnesty International that, the smoke from the bomb which landed near her in Elley Fottah was “black and then turned blue.” She said that she saw the smoke several times in other villages while she was fleeing. Haigah said that she and her daughter were still suffering from the effects of being exposed to the smoke, more than six months later.

**“When [the bomb] landed there was some flames and then dark smoke... It was a big explosion... Lots of smoke. You couldn't see anything... Immediately it caused vomiting and dizziness... My skin is not normal. It became tough. It was not soft like before... a few months later I became unconscious... I woke up in the hospital... [about a week] later I was released... I still have headaches, even after I took medicine. I feel pain in my chest... the baby is not recovering... he is swollen... he has blisters and wounds... the other children all started vomiting too... a few days later the other children got better. But this one has not become well... It causes an eye infection too... they say he will get better if he drinks [breast] milk ... but it is not working.”<sup>223</sup>**

Salmah, in his thirties, told Amnesty International that he was hiding in the bush around Kutrum when a bomb fell close to him. He said he became sick after coming into contact with gas that was released from the bomb.

**“The bombing [from aircrafts] excreted some gases, which smelled bad and the children got diarrhoea and they were dying... the bombs fell in front of us... from that moment a bad smell came out. Even myself, right then I vomited... It smells worse than rotten eggs... At the moment of the bombing the smoke becomes dark blue then changed to purple then it disappeared, then we started smelling it... This happened several times... I was about a quarter of a kilometre away... The smell appeared 15 minutes after the bombing... Everyone was vomiting and**

<sup>221</sup> Amnesty International interviews in June, July, August, and September.

<sup>222</sup> Amnesty International interview in June; Kalthoma also provided the names of one woman killed by a bomb as they were running together from Burro village.

<sup>223</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

**coughing... People started running away but the animals didn't run... Some donkeys died from the smell [gas]... The gases changed the colour of my body to white... My skin became white... It has not recovered completely but it has [four months later] started changing back... My youngest child was walking before the attack. Now she is only crawling.”<sup>224</sup>**

Khadija, in her teens, was also in the bush near Korrow when the area was bombed. She and her baby both became sick after coming into contact with the bomb.

**“My child is sick. She got sick from the poison of shelling and bombardment... Since [the bombing] I feel pain in my kidney and I lost my appetite and I'm always tired... My [twenty-month-old] baby has rashes that turned into wounds... The baby is malnourished. He refuses to eat.”<sup>225</sup>**

Zainab, in her thirties, was at home in the small village of Karme, near Kadingo, when it was bombed. She was wounded and believes she became sick from the smoke.

**“I was hit by the bomb in my village... when the village was bombed by parents took me to the *wadi* called ALO... I was injured [by the bomb]. My wound is on my side. It does not respond to the medicine. It has not healed. Liquid is still running out like water... My urine has changed. It became yellow. Then brown/red. Now it is grey.... My eyes have changed and I cannot see well... my eyes have become brown... I started losing my hair... My breath smells bad... my skin became grey.”<sup>226</sup>**

Zainab also said that while she was hiding near a *wadi*, a bomb landed in the *wadi* and the water turned red.<sup>227</sup>

## **MEMBERS OF SLA/AW**

Gibril, a senior SLA/AW commander, told Amnesty International that “while we were fighting, we were bombed with poisonous rockets... the fighters in that area became unconscious... colleagues brought them salt and limes to revive them.”

Abdulrahman, a member of SLA/AW in his twenties, was working on his farm outside of the village of Tinde, near KWILA, on 8 August, when a bomb landed in the village and he ran into the village to see what had happened.

**“The kids who were nearby were affected by the smoke... the smoke was black then it became purple and then yellow... I was affected. I started coughing and even spitting black blood on the same day. And I feel a sharp pain in my spine whenever I cough. It gets a little better when it is cold outside.... There was a woman from the area and her baby got wounds all over his body for no reason.”**

## **6.1.4 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS AND CAREGIVERS IN NORTHERN JEBEL MARRA**

Amnesty International interviewed 13 survivors of alleged chemical weapons attacks in northern Jebel Marra and two caregivers who treated victims of these attacks. Amnesty International also interviewed one SLA/AW fighter who survived an alleged chemical weapons attack.

### **CAREGIVERS**

Ishaq, said that he had helped to care for 38 victims of alleged chemical weapons attacks and that 18 of those had died.<sup>228</sup> Most of the people he cared for told him that they became sick during attacks in January and February. He also said that he had seen numerous children in the area who displayed signs of exposure

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<sup>224</sup> Amnesty International interview in April 2016.

<sup>225</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>226</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>227</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>228</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

to the suspected chemical weapons who have not received treatment. He described the signs and symptoms that he commonly observed in the people he cared for.

**“These are the most common symptoms from the bombardment and the rocket fire, which diffused poison, which changed the colour of eyes and induced vomiting and diarrhoea, which was sometimes bloody and caused many miscarriages... Sometimes people with diarrhoea get a high fever and then their diarrhoea becomes bloody... Sometimes you can see the colour of the body change and the colour of the eyes and then, all of a sudden, they die... their skin becomes dark black and there are rashes and blisters and they turn into wounds... Some people’s eyes become yellow/green, some become yellow/orange, and some become maroon... and if you open the eyelid, the inside changes to red with black spots... In two cases it looked like [the eyes] were going to pop out of the head... Some children suffered hair loss... The patients’ urine changes to different colours. To orange and then red. Sometimes [the urine] is mix of black and dark blue.... Some people have trouble breathing... and they have a very fast heartbeat... Sometimes the blood pressure is low and sometimes it is very high... Many children have swollen bodies... [In three cases] adults had seizures. Two died... Once we noticed the sick person shaking uncontrollably... we needed three or four people to keep him on the bed until one part of the body became paralyzed. Fifteen minutes later, he passed away.”**

Omar said that numerous people had told him that bombs exploded in the air and released a flame before hitting the ground. After the flame, dust or powder disperses in the air. Some patients also told him that the substance released from the bombs smelled like rotten eggs, others said that it smelled like chlorine. Many people told him the smoke was black and then turned blue.<sup>229</sup>

Ismail, was present in the area around Kaguro in late January 2016 when a bomb landed in a neighbouring village. He and another man went to the village to try to help people. They found several adults and eight children whose skin had completely changed colour, “their skin was falling off and their bodies had become rotten... and their breath was very bad”, he said. Several of the children died and, eight months later, some are still languishing in pain. One child refused to eat after the attack. He was taken to a medical clinic but he did not respond. “[The child] continued to lose weight until his body was like a skeleton.”<sup>230</sup>

## **CIVILIAN VICTIMS**

Siddiq, was in Kaguro when it was attacked in mid-January. During the attack on Kaguro, Siddiq fled to the hills where he witnessed an attack with what he believes to have been a poisonous bomb.

**“There was fighting inside Kaguro... fifteen civilians were killed... the Janjaweed intimidated me, threatened me, and took everything I had on my body... the hospital [in Kaguro] was completely looted ... I know this because I went back to the village to see and I found that nothing was left... I went back 20 days later and I found two old men and one old woman still in the village, nothing else... Lots of people got sick from the poisonous bombs, especially children... the smoke was black then it changes to different colours: to red, orange and green... It smells bad... I could smell it from the hill I was hiding... it smells like chlorine, like sulphide... when it rains, the smell comes back out of the ground... the white part of children’s eyes turn green/blue... and they have diarrhoea and vomiting.”<sup>231</sup>**

Shogar, from a village near Kaguro, was present when the area was attacked. He told Amnesty International he had taken several children to see caregivers after they became sick from the smoke that was released from a bomb.

**“I am not the one treating the cases but I took several cases to the [other people to help them] ... once I came across seven children [here] who had been near a bomb when it landed... they had rashes all over their bodies and their eyes were infected... even those who got better, they are still suffering in their eyes... their eyes change to yellow/orange. And they are not seeing well anymore.”<sup>232</sup>**

Ibrahim, in his forties, was in his village in the area of Kaguro when it was heavily bombed on 15 January. He fled to a nearby hill where he observed regular aerial bombardment in the area during the following three days. The hill he was hiding on was also targeted by gunfire from a helicopter.

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<sup>229</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>230</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>231</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>232</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

**“On 18 January helicopters came and started targeting people hiding in the hills, where most of the people were hiding... Four people were shot and killed by the helicopters... and then a white Antonov with a red or maroon underside came and dropped bombs near us. We ran away... eleven days later we ran to Tarrongah. Then the Antonov came back and bombed all the villages and hills around Kaguro. And it bombed the well [near Tarrongah]. The well was destroyed... the colour of the water turned to grey... There was no [drinkable] water so we were compelled to go to another area.”**

Ibrahim told Amnesty International that while he was hiding in the hills “some people were injured by the shrapnel from the bombs and some were injured by the smoke.” He described the ailments that he witnessed from people injured by the smoke.

**“Some bombs caused people to vomit and their eyes bulged out... the vomiting started about fifteen minutes later... some people weren’t even wounded and their eyes bulged out... the eyes usually bulged out after two days... Some people’s urine changed to white. Then yellow. And then red... The people whose urine changed to red, they died... Those whose eyes bulged out, some died. Those who survived, their eyes are still bulged out [six months later]. They have problems with vision... Some people immediately became unable to move... we had to move them... they could move their hand, but they could not stand up... Two to three hours later they became unconscious. Four of them died”<sup>233</sup>**

Ibrahim told Amnesty International that the smoke from the bombs had different colours. “Sometimes the smoke from the bomb was black, sometimes it changes from black to grey and yellow. It took about ten minutes to change”, he said.<sup>234</sup>

Khalil, in his thirties, was at his home in a village near Kaguro, when it was bombed on 16 January. He became very ill after being exposed to smoke released from one of the bombs.

**“We were in [this village] at around eight or nine in the morning and we were surprised by Antonov planes dropping bombs... When one bomb landed in the village we were covered by a cloud of smoke and there were sparks going everywhere... At that moment I developed a problem with vision, I couldn’t see well... I was not [otherwise] wounded but I am partly paralyzed. And water keeps running from my eyes... and the smell [of the smoke] was so bad, it caused me to have difficulty breathing... The explosion blew me away and I fell down... then we were rescued and taken to [a nearby village] ... The village [that we were taken to] was then attacked by people on horseback and camelback and they torched the whole village... it was Arabs and some Africans and also soldiers in military uniforms... we escaped from [the village] ... we ran into the hills for several days... There was no water [in the hills]. I needed to drink water... with the help of some people I was able to walk to Roagah village, where there is a well... We drank water and rested and then we came [here].”**

Khalil also described his observations of the explosion as well as the symptoms that he developed in the aftermath of the attack.

**“The smoke was initially black then it turned green... It had a nasty smell as if something rotten was mixed with the smell of chlorine and with something else that I cannot describe... The four people who were closest to where the bomb landed, their eyes all bulged out... I was about a half a kilometer away [from the explosion] ... When the bomb exploded my muscles started contracting. And later the same day I started shaking a lot... and then I started losing feeling in the left side of my body, from my leg to my shoulder... and this is the side of the body that I didn’t land on [when I was knocked over by the explosion] ... later, the whole side became paralyzed. Now I can only walk with a stick... I also vomited a lot [soon after the bomb exploded] ... and two days later my urine became red... there were four of us whose urine turned to red. I am the only one who survived. After about two weeks my skin started falling off... at that time I was suffering a lot... [Nine months later] I have gotten better but I am not fully recovered. My skin is coming back.”<sup>235</sup>**

Mouhaldin, in his thirties, was in Gamarah village when it was attacked in January. His house was looted and torched and several members of his family, including one of his young sons, were killed. His other young son became sick after a bomb exploded near to him.

**“It was about 5 in the morning and we heard the echo of shelling... before we realized it we were being attacked. We ran away with our children barefoot. They took everything from our house and they used the hay to burn the room... When the attack started we ran to the hills. We saw smoke coming from the village... [Two days**

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<sup>233</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>234</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>235</sup> Amnesty International interview in September 2016.

later] we went back and found the whole village burned down... People were killed.... My Uncle was shot while taking his camels [out of the village] ... My cousin, they killed him and they took his goats... My [28-month-old] son, while he was running with his mother and older brother, the bullet caught him... The bombing started midday [while we were hiding in the hills] ... there was bombing in Gamarah and in Kayah... The rebels were in the hills west of Kayah. They fired from the hills and then they ran away... The attack affected the children. My [three-year-old] son, he was not injured but since the day of the attack he started coughing and had difficulty breathing, and he started vomiting and having diarrhea... and then his skin started falling off... The planes came near where we were hiding and everyone ran away and the boy was left behind... The bomb landed near to him... When we came back [a few hours later] and found him, he was sick... His coughing started the same day... The vomiting and diarrhea started the next day... His skin started falling off two weeks later... His urine changed to green... It is now yellow... His eyes turned to green, now they are a bit better.... He lost a lot of weight. He became almost like a skeleton. [Nine months later] he has not recovered.”

Mouhaldin also gave his observations about the bomb he saw explode and that he believes caused his son to become sick.

**“The bomb exploded before it hit the ground... I saw two bombs explode like this... one [had smoke which changed colour] and one exploded in the air and iron pieces like knives came out... the colour of smoke started as black... and then it changed to red and then grey and then white, before it fell to the ground... The smoke smelled rotten, like when millet is kept in water for a long time...”**<sup>236</sup>

## 6.1.5 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS AND CAREGIVERS IN CENTRAL JEBEL MARRA

Amnesty International interviewed two people who cared for victims and survivors based in central Jebel Marra who had treated patients for exposure to alleged chemical weapons attacks. Both caregivers were themselves survivors of chemical weapons attacks. Amnesty International interviewed five other survivors of alleged chemical weapons attacks in central Jebel Marra, including one member of SLA/AW.<sup>237</sup>

### CAREGIVERS

Khamis cared for numerous people with ailments he believes were caused by exposure to chemical weapons in the mountains south of Sorrong. 19 of the people he cared for died.

Khamis said that all the people who died experienced major changes to the skin. About half had wounds that turned green, and the other half had skin fall off and blisters appear, from which a clear fluid leaked out, “or at least a liquid that looked like water”, he said. All 19 died within a month of exposure, the 19 included children.

Khamis has been caring for victims of attacks in Jebel Marra since the start of the conflict in 2003. He told Amnesty that he had never before seen anything like these ailments.

Khamis described the most common signs that he observed in his patients who were exposed to the alleged chemical weapons.

**“I have treated patients for normal wounds and some who are suffering from poison... Every patient [who was suffering from poison] had diarrhoea and it was not treatable. It looked like the food was not being digested... The diarrhoea usually started about two to three hours after [exposure]... Many people vomited. The diarrhoea usually starts first and then vomiting. Some people vomited blood... Most of the people who vomited blood died... Their urine smells very bad... [the urine] changes colour to yellow and then to maroon.... Some people lose their vision... problems with the eyes usually start a few hours after the diarrhoea begins... sometimes the actual eye shrinks. Sometimes the eyes look like they are popping out... sometimes the white part of the eyes turns green/yellow... The patients’ breath smells very bad... and the breath seems hot, even though the patient has no fever... Some patients have trouble breathing. They are breathing very fast... some of their tongues are**

<sup>236</sup> Amnesty International interview in September 2016.

<sup>237</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

swollen... the patients have high blood pressure... Some patients had seizures, especially their heads. Their heads start shaking uncontrollably... [the seizures] usually start three or four days later... [everyone who had a seizure] died... the smoke also causes many women to have miscarriages... sometimes [the miscarriages] occur on the same day. Sometimes a little later. The women often feel sick and weak for months.”

Amnesty International interviewed Khamis for a second time on 21 August. A few hours before the interview, the area he was in was attacked.

**“One bomb landed near the school of [this village], just five metres from the wall of the class... I was about 50 meters away... some people suffered from vomiting... I didn’t vomit, I had a protective mask... I have nausea... the smell was putrid... like the insecticide DDT [dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane] but worse... and like gunpowder... the smell lasted for about ten minutes... the smoke was black and dark maroon... it turned to grey white in about five minutes... the smoke formed a cloud in the air... the leaves of the trees all became black, like carbon.”<sup>238</sup>**

Ishaq had been treating victims of attacks in Jebel Marra for years. He said that, since January, “the wounds are different than those I am accustomed to seeing. The bombardment causes rashes that do not respond to medicine.”

Ishaq said he had cared for about a dozen adults for serious cases of exposure to smoke from bombs and about 100 children. He said that three adults and 17 children had died while in his care.

**“Some people are injured from the shrapnel... Many of the patients became sick without ever coming into contact with anything other than smoke... [The patients] suffer from itchy eyes. They are always wanting to scratch their eyes... They are itching all over their body... and they vomit and have diarrhoea. The diarrhoea starts very soon after they come in contact with the smoke... It is different from normal vomiting because they start vomiting blood... some patients go unconscious after they start vomiting blood... they often go in and out of consciousness for days... Their eyes change to red... Their urine changes colour until it becomes red. It usually takes three days for it to turn to red... They are often breathing very quickly... and their breath smells musty... Some people who were very close to the bomb had no wounds but suddenly start shaking. The whole body shakes uncontrollably... a lot of children start shivering and then their whole body shakes and then their muscles become frozen.”**

Amnesty International interviewed Ishaq twice. During the first interview, he said that he had seen the smoke multiple times and that it “smells like pepper but more putrid... and the smoke is sometimes maroon and then changes to grey/white... and sometimes the smoke is black and it leaves a black stain on the trees.”

On 21 August, a few hours before his second interview with Amnesty, Khamis’s area, the same as Ishaq’s, was attacked.

**“I was in [this village], about 200-300 metres from where [four] bombs landed [at around 10am] ... When the breeze came towards us I myself vomited... no one was injured but everyone was affected by the poison... the bomb hit the ground and then the smoke appeared... the smoke was dark maroon and then changed to white over the course of five minutes... [the smoke] didn’t go directly up, it forms a cloud... it smelled very bad. Like something rotten mixed with something else... kind of like hot pepper and something putrid... and I could smell the gunpowder too... I vomited for three or four minutes... it looked like normal vomit... then I drank water and vomited again... [Eight hours later] I am still nauseous.”<sup>239</sup>**

## **CIVILIAN VICTIMS**

Hissein, in his sixties, was in his village, east of Golo, in January, when his village and the surrounding area was bombed and then attacked by ground forces.<sup>240</sup> More than five months after the attack he was still suffering from the effects of the smoke from the bombs.

**“We were chased from our village by bombs and by the attackers. The bombs came first, including one bomb that landed inside the village... We ran. We lay down and a bomb fell near us. The smoke made us sick... Other people lay down [near us] and they were bombed. Three children and three adults were killed... We gathered the parts of the bodies that were scattered by the bomb. We buried the bodies... We returned to the village and I was**

<sup>238</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>239</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>240</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

**treated there but it wasn't enough so I was evacuated to [a town outside of Jebel Marra] for more treatment... I was treated for the poison that comes out of the bomb... [two days after the attack] before I was taken to the hospital [outside Jebel Marra] I became unconscious... [I woke up in the hospital] the doctor said that if I was not taken to the hospital I would have died... My skin is shedding like a snake's skin... before my skin all wore off. Now I am growing new skin. ... I have trouble breathing. Before I was strong. Now I am weak. My heart has become weak."**

Hissein told Amnesty International that when the smoke burst from the bomb it was black and then it turned purple and then blue. He also said that it smelled and looked like an insecticide that people sometimes use in Sudan. "It smells like what people used to kill insects", he said.<sup>241</sup>

Mahassan, in her twenties, was in a village around Kibily, south of Sorrong, when a bomb landed near to her. She and her child both became sick shortly afterward.

**"[The smoke] initially caused us to cough... My [two-year-old] child started vomiting [right away] ... Then he got symptoms like influenza. Then his stomach became swollen... My child stopped eating... That is when she became malnourished... I now feel pain in my chest and I cannot walk long distances."**

Mahassan told Amnesty International that the smoke from the bomb was black when it was discharged and then it turned grey. "[The smoke from] some bombs turned red", she said. "It smells very bad. It smells like someone burning plastic."<sup>242</sup>

Aziza, in her twenties, fled from her village when it was attacked in January. She told Amnesty International how a bomb landed in the bush near where she and her two-year-old child had taken shelter. More than five months after being exposed to the smoke from the bomb, she and her baby are still suffering from its effects.

**"The smoke was black and then it turned blue... It smelled very bad. If you smell it then you will vomit... I got sick. I am still sick. I am in pain. Sometimes I feel dizzy... [soon after the bomb landed] I felt my muscles contract... the next day I felt like I [was becoming] paralyzed. Two days [after the bombing] I was not able to move... And then I wasn't able to walk at all for a month... I got some injections and now I am a little better... Wounds are [still] everywhere on my baby's body... the baby was walking. Now it doesn't walk... The body of the baby is swollen and the stomach is inflated... The skin of the baby's body, when you touch it, it [peels off]."**<sup>243</sup>

Quscondy, a man from Joh Kosteï village, east of Golo, said that he had witnessed numerous attacks with bombs that released poisonous smoke in the area around the village in January and February. He told Amnesty International that many children died from vomiting and diarrhoea after being exposed to the smoke. And that adults died as well, including his father.

**"My father passed away because of the smoke. ... [After he was exposed to the smoke] he started vomiting blood and he had bloody diarrhoea... then his eyes turned yellow and orange... his urine changed to red... he also lost his appetite... there was no medicine to give him... we tried to save him. We took him to [a town outside of Jebel Marra]."**<sup>244</sup>

Quscondy told Amnesty International that the bombs with poison tended to explode before they hit the ground and that "you could see a small light flash" right before the explosion. He also said that sometimes the smoke coming out of the bombs was black and then disappeared and, more often it turned from black to blue and then to grey and then white.<sup>245</sup>

## **6.1.6 ACCOUNTS FROM SURVIVORS AND CAREGIVERS IN SOUTHERN JEBEL MARRA**

Amnesty International interviewed 14 survivors or people who cared for survivors and victims in of alleged chemical weapons attacks in southern Jebel Marra. Amnesty International also five members of SLA/AW.

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<sup>241</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>242</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>243</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>244</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>245</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

## CAREGIVERS

Abduljabbar, a caregiver and member of the SLA/AW, told Amnesty International that he treated 45 civilians and armed opposition group fighters in western and southern Jebel Marra.<sup>246</sup> “10 died, 30 improved, and five are still sick”, he said.<sup>247</sup> When Abduljabbar spoke with Amnesty International, he was in the process of treating victims from an attack around the area of Golol in early August. He described the signs and symptoms that he had observed from victims during the preceding seven months.<sup>248</sup>

**“Guys are wounded by bombs and they develop strange symptoms... their skin changes... Those exposed to the poison experience severe vomiting, diarrhoea, and coughing... People affected, their skin turns dark black, and it becomes tough... sometimes [the skin] changes in just two hours... sometimes it returns to normal after a strong dose of medicine.... They develop blisters. The blisters become wounds... Their eyes turn yellow/green, some turn red... The eyes usually change after two to three days... Their urine turns different colours, to red, maroon, and black... the urine doesn’t change immediately, it usually takes seven to eight hours... Their defecation smells abnormal... Their breath is not normal, it reeks. [Their breath] usually changes later in the day... Some people have gone unconscious... Some people start to shake uncontrollably... Two died after these seizures, five survived.”<sup>249</sup>**

Abduljabbar described the symptoms of several of the people he cared for, including a woman who was injured in an attack.

**“She was wounded [by shrapnel] on her back and her leg by an attack on 4 February at 10 in the morning... I arrived 45 minutes after the attack. I found her... she had lost a lot of blood... At midnight she started coughing and spitting out small balls of blood and had difficulty breathing. Then her breath started to smell.... The next day was really bad. The skin started to change and toughen and turn black. And the wounds started to change colour to maroon and then black. And the areas around got swollen and infected and did not respond to medicine.... White part of the eyes became yellow and maroon.... She lost vision. Her stools changed to yellow/green and then to red/maroon with musty smell... I transferred her [to a city outside of Jebel Marra].”**

Abduljabbar said that he had seen the smoke himself several times. He described the smell, the colour, and the type of explosion.

**“It smells harsh, like pepper and rotten eggs... there are different types of poisonous bombs... one type explodes in the air, there is a flash, like lightning. Then there is a dark grey smoke... Sometimes [poison is released from] a regular bomb that explodes on contact... sometimes the smoke turns blue... The leaves of trees are dyed dark with powder... Sometimes it kills the leaves and the grass.”<sup>250</sup>**

Harbah cared for numerous people who had been exposed to the alleged chemical weapons agents during the attacks in mid-January in the area around Saboon El-Fagoor and Kurulang-Banj.<sup>251</sup>

Harbah provided Amnesty International with the names of 18 people who died in his care from these attacks from the villages of Saboon Al-Fagoor, Gwobo, and Row Madille, mostly woman and children. He said that many other people died before receiving any treatment. Harbah also told Amnesty International what he believed to be the proximate cause of death of each of the 18 victims, the most common causes being suffocation, or some combination of bloody diarrhoea and bloody vomit. All 18 died within two and half weeks of the attack; most died within a week.

Harbah described the most common signs and symptoms that he observed in the people he cared for.

**“Many of those suffering from the smoke are not able to open their mouths... some people, their bodies are burned and their skin becomes grey/blue... many stomachs are swollen... there is a lot of diarrhoea and vomiting with blood... they are coughing. But after a while they still want to cough but they cannot.... Some [patients] become unconscious. Four were brought to me unconscious... some people’s muscles contract, they become hard... Some people’s eyes pop out... the inner part of the eyelid becomes purple and black... Their urine smells musty. It changes in colour to brown/green or to maroon... Those who died from poison, you can’t wash their bodies because the skin is separating from bodies.”**

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<sup>246</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>247</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>248</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>249</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>250</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>251</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

Harbah told Amnesty International that he has no modern medicine with which to treat the victims and that he is mostly treating them with a combination of salt, limes, and local herbs.<sup>252</sup>

Adeeb, said that he cared for approximately 100 people with symptoms caused by exposure to chemical weapons, 30 of whom died in his care.<sup>253</sup> He witnessed several attacks and said that the smoke released from the bombs was “sometimes black and sometimes white” and “that it smelled like a factory in Khartoum that is grinding garbage, but worse.”

Adeeb described the most common ailments that he had observed in the people he cared for. Many of them had experienced problems with their vision and several had gone blind.

**“Their eyes swell up and there is always liquid running down from the eyes. The liquid is like tears but somehow different. Sometimes the liquid has the same colour as blood... a lot of people’s eye’s pop out... some went blind... the eye-related problems usually develop one or two days after exposure... There is lots of vomiting and diarrhoea. This happens immediately or very soon after exposure. It is especially bad in children... The vomit is sometimes black and sometimes white... the diarrhoea is mostly black... Most of the victims who died did so because of vomiting and diarrhoea. A lot of them died on the day of the attack, some died up to three days later... A lot of people’s skin turned black and then they died... sometimes the changes [to the skin] start within 30 minutes [after exposure] ... if you touch any part of the body, the skin falls off... the skin remains in your hand.”**

Adeeb mentioned other signs and symptoms including that several people’s bodies had swelled up, that several had lost consciousness, and that the smell of their breath changed and ended up smelling like fecal matter. He also said that some people had difficulty breathing and that this usually started a few hours after exposure.

Adeeb said that he was caring for patients with local herbs, with glucose for dehydration, and with some antibiotics that are commonly used for diarrhoea and that these were all usually ineffective.<sup>254</sup>

## CIVILIAN VICTIMS



Fuju village, 2008. ©Jérôme Tubiana

<sup>252</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>253</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>254</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

Kenya, in her thirties, was in Fuju village, east of Golol, on 5 August when a bomb landed very close to her and her eight children. She was severely wounded, as were four of her children. Amnesty International spoke with her ten days after the attack. She described what she remembered from the attack as well as some of the ailments that she subsequently experienced.

**“[My children and I] were walking on our farm... we were buried by the earth [that was kicked up by the explosion]. Some people came and got us out [from underneath the rubble] ... I was taken to the [a nearby village] ... they gave some medicine to me and to my kids. They told me it was for the poison.... I have severe wounds on my legs from the shrapnel. The shrapnel cut me like knives... four of my children were also wounded from the shrapnel... After we arrived in the hospital we started vomiting and having diarrhoea... And my skin changed. It became hard. And it became green... And my urine has changed to become red, the children’s too... And I am having difficulty breathing... And my breath does not smell like it did before... I am having difficulty moving. I cannot stand up. And one child [cannot move], he cannot urinate by himself.”**

Kenya ended her interview because she was in too much pain to speak.<sup>255</sup>

Amnesty International also spoke with Abduljabbar, who cared for Kenya. He said that Kenya had lost consciousness when she arrived at the hospital, that she has been experiencing trouble seeing, and that tears were constantly running from her eyes. He also said he had observed the changes she described about her skin following the exposure.<sup>256</sup>

Amnesty International also spoke with Hakeem, who was present in Fuju in mid-July when a bomb landed very close to where he was standing. He said:

**“I suffered from the poison from the bomb but now I am a little better... [a couple weeks] after the attack I saw the destruction [made by the bomb] but at the moment of the bombing I couldn’t see anything... my eyes became swollen right away... and [I was told] that they became red [later on] ... and I vomited and I had diarrhoea... I started having diarrhoea almost immediately. The vomiting started after about 30 minutes... My urine became red on the same day... And my skin turned black and became hard... My breath smells bad... And I have trouble breathing sometimes... My body has become weak. I can only walk a short distance.”<sup>257</sup>**

Abdulkerim, a traditional leader from the area around Kurulang-Banj, survived an attack near Kurulan-Banj on 15 or 16 January 2016. He saw several bombs that “exploded in the air” one of which exploded about 50 meters from where he was. After the explosion he saw black smoke disperse from the bomb. The smoke gradually changed from “black to grey and then white.” He said the smoke dried his throat for several days and that the smell “was very bad. Like gun powder but worse” and did not go away for several days. He observed one of the canisters, which delivered the smoke, which he described as “a small barrel, which could contain about two jerry cans of water.”

Abdulkerim said that many adults and children from his area died as a result of the attacks. “For the children it caused diarrhoea. And the diarrhoea caused some death. Others suffered from vomiting”, he said.

Abdulkerim provided the names of eight children and three adults from his village and the surrounding area who died within a week after being exposed to the smoke.<sup>258</sup>

Baguis, a teacher from the area around Kurulang-Banj, was present in the same area as Abdulkerim when it was attacked in January. He was at his school at the time of the attack. He recalls seeing a “strange smoke” being released from bombs and rockets that fell in the area. He said the smoke came in many colours, “black, blue, grey, and yellow”. It caused him to cough and many people to vomit and have diarrhoea. He told Amnesty International that many women had miscarriages after the bombing.<sup>259</sup>

Abakir, in his fifties, was in a village in the area of Feina when it was attacked on 14 February. He ran and hid in a nearby *wadi*, with numerous people from the nearby villages. A rocket landed near where they were hiding, which released a large amount of smoke. His 14-month-old daughter was exposed to the smoke. She died a month and a half later. Abakir believes that she died from exposure to the smoke. She was not otherwise injured by the attack.

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<sup>255</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>256</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>257</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>258</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>259</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

**“There was a lot of smoke and we all got sick. And the children immediately started vomiting and having diarrhoea... My daughter got infected at the moment of the attack... There were no doctors and no medicine... She died in at the beginning of April... Two other children [who were exposed to the smoke] also died. And several women miscarried.... The smoke smelled very bad... and it makes you thirsty. You feel dehydrated... It was different colours. It was black and violet, and blue/green and white.”<sup>260</sup>**

## **MEMBERS OF SLA/AW**

Yagoob, an armed opposition group officer in charge of humanitarian issues, told Amnesty International that “the government started using ... poisonous weapons. We don’t know what the poison is. Poison is coming from bombs and land missiles... it causes many miscarriages.”<sup>261</sup>

Abdulaye, a senior armed opposition group commander from southern Jebel Marra, told Amnesty International that many people have been poisoned by “barrel explosions”, which caused many people to vomit and have diarrhoea.

**“I saw it with my own eyes and buried people who died from poison, including a son of my friend... The bodies of the infected people are swollen. The colour of their tongues becomes yellow... It smells like someone burning plastic, mixed with the smell of rotten eggs... All the birds in our area have died.”<sup>262</sup>**

Kobei, a SLA/AW commander, told Amnesty International that he had observed poisonous smoke from bombs and rockets on multiple occasions and that he had come in contact with the smoke on two occasions, in February and in July 2016.

**“In February it was bad. In July I was further away and I just started coughing a lot... The smoke smells very bad... it is hot, like pepper... sometimes the smoke is black, sometimes red... [during the attack in July] I started vomiting immediately. And I had diarrhoea, which lasted for nine days... [five months later I still] feel like my entire body is burning. I am always sweating... if I get an injection [of antibiotics from the nurse] then it stops temporarily... my urine becomes red... sometimes my breath smells very bad. People hate to be near me... it makes pimples on the skin that are infected and puss comes out.”<sup>263</sup>**

Kobei also described the condition of a colleague who was with him, who found it difficult to speak since being exposed to the smoke. “His skin has become dark as if it was burned. And if you touch it, it falls off and the area turns into a wound... he is always coughing... he is always thirsty... he is very weak”, he said.<sup>264</sup>

Abdulrauf, was injured by a bomb during an attack on an area in the hills outside of Tourong-Toara at around midnight on 10 July. A bomb landed very close to him and he was wounded by the shrapnel on his stomach and his hand. He told Amnesty International that he found out afterward that the bomb had been poisonous. He also told Amnesty International that he started vomiting immediately and that he started having diarrhoea about 30 minutes later. He said that the smell of his breath and his voice had changed and that his urine turned red and that it was painful to urinate.<sup>265</sup>

Abduljabbar, the nurse taking care of Abdulrauf, told Amnesty International that Abdulrauf had arrived at his clinic about three hours after the attack and that when he arrived he was vomiting severely. He also said that he had noticed an initial change in his urine to yellow/green and then to red later the following day.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>261</sup> Amnesty International interview in July 2016.

<sup>262</sup> Amnesty International interview in May 2016.

<sup>263</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>264</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>265</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

<sup>266</sup> Amnesty International interview in August 2016.

# 7. CONCLUSION

Darfur has been besieged by violent conflict for 13 years. The resulting human suffering has been immense.

The Government of Sudan's ongoing attacks in Jebel Marra – the latest in a series of military offensives, dating back to 2003, that have ravaged Darfur's civilian population – are but the most recent illustration of a catastrophic pattern of violence.

The international community's response to the violence has been deplorable, with no effective measures having been taken to prevent gross violations of human rights from recurring. The promise of justice remains illusory as does the promise of disarmament. Thirteen years of peace talks and peace agreements have brought no security and no peace dividend.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance and the deployment of peacekeeping troops provide urgently needed aid and protection; however, the space in which this aid and protection are offered is far too limited. The complete lack of assistance or protection for civilians inside Jebel Marra is tragic evidence of these limitations. The tens of thousands of civilians from Jebel Marra receiving safe haven and relief outside the UNAMID base in Sortoni are a crystal clear example of the vital role that peacekeepers and humanitarian actors can and should continue to play in Darfur.

The safe haven and relief being provided at the UNAMID base in Sortoni, however, also illustrates the inadequate nature of protection and assistance being provided in Darfur inside IDP camps, which are almost always the only places where Darfur's most vulnerable groups can find any form of protection or assistance. Civilians have been killed within the site's protective perimeter; residents of the camp have reported numerous incidents of sexual violence when they attempt to leave the site to gather firewood essential for cooking; humanitarian actors working on the site have felt pressured by the government to underreport the number of displaced people and, as a result, are forced to design their programming based on an artificially low number of beneficiaries; UNAMID and humanitarian actors have been unable to transport urgently need supplies, including water, along the road from the nearby town of Kebkabiya; and UNAMID flights to its own base have regularly been cancelled by the government. The conflict-affected population in northern Jebel Marra, particularly its most vulnerable members, have faced severe, often fatal, consequences as a result of these shortcomings.

While President al-Bashir pronounces that peace has arrived in Darfur, the actions of the armed forces under his command reveal no indication that the Government of Sudan intends to halt its pattern of brutal and unlawful attacks. On the contrary, alleged chemical weapons use represents not only a new low in the catalogue of serious abuses perpetrated by government forces in Darfur but also a new high in the level of hubris displayed by the government towards the international community. The repeated use of chemical weapons – the prohibition against which is considered to be among the most inviolable tenets of international humanitarian law – inside a region ostensibly protected by the world's second-largest peacekeeping mission, betrays a regime and military structure that does not fear international retribution.

Absent the heretofore elusive just and sustainable peace or a major shift in Sudan's political dynamics, the international community should approach Darfur under the assumption that its massive humanitarian and human rights problems will continue for the foreseeable future. The challenge for the international community, which must be driven by the UN Security Council, is to recognize this grim reality and to devise a serious, realistic, and long-term plan to address the dire protection and humanitarian needs of Darfur's civilian population. Ensuring implementation of the measures toward justice, disarmament, humanitarian access, and civilian protection, including a robust and mobile peacekeeping force, that the Council has already resolved to enact would go a long way towards this end. Darfur's long-suffering people deserve this, at the very least.



A peacekeeper stands guard at the UNAMID base in Sortoni, north Darfur, 2016. ©Amnesty International

# 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

## **TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN**

- Immediately allow all humanitarian actors free and unfettered access to all areas inside Jebel Marra and to all IDP camps in towns outside of Jebel Marra, including specialized medical care for the treatment of serious injuries sustained during the recent violence.
- Immediately allow UNAMID unfettered access to all of Jebel Marra, including to establish operating bases.
- End and suppress all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law being committed by members of the armed forces and allied militias in Jebel Marra; immediately order all government forces in Jebel Marra to cease all attacks against civilians and civilian property.
- Immediately cease all attacks involving chemical weapons; prohibit the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and destroy both chemical weapons production facilities and the weapons themselves.
- Conduct a prompt, effective and impartial investigation into the allegations of serious violations of international humanitarian law and other serious violations and abuses of international human rights law including those described in this report; bring those suspected of criminal responsibility to justice in open, accessible civilian courts and in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.
- Ensure that all individuals who have suffered violations or abuses of human rights are afforded an effective remedy and reparations, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.
- Co-operate fully with the International Criminal Court's ongoing investigations into the situation in Darfur.

## **TO THE AFRICAN UNION/UNITED NATIONS HYBRID OPERATION IN DARFUR (UNAMID)**

- Establish a permanent presence inside Jebel Marra, including a permanent base inside the town of Golo and proactive patrols throughout the region.
- Investigate and publicly report on allegations of violations of IHL and IHRL by members of Sudanese government forces and opposition forces in Jebel Marra; if access is not granted then UNAMID human rights officers should investigate by interviewing survivors in camps, through telecommunications and other remote research methods.

## **TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

- Apply sufficient political pressure on the government of Sudan such that it permits UNAMID and all humanitarian actors unfettered access into Jebel Marra so that they are allowed to provide humanitarian assistance and, in the case UNAMID, establish operating bases and implement proactive patrols.
- Recommend that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) obtain clarification about the nature and extent of Sudan's chemical weapons program, demand that Sudan co-operate fully with the OPCW, and reserve the right to enact other measures to support

the OPCW's efforts, including the creation of a OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify individuals, entities, groups, or governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the development or use of chemicals as weapons in the Republic of Sudan.

- Undertake measures to enforce the current UN arms embargo on Darfur; expand the arms embargo on Darfur to cover the whole of Sudan, and thus help to prevent further violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in Darfur and elsewhere in the country.
- Undertake measures to ensure Sudan's co-operation with the ICC, in accordance with UNSC resolution 1593.

#### **TO THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION (CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION)**

- Request that the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons obtain clarification from the government of Sudan about its alleged use of chemical weapons in Jebel Marra in accordance with Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention. If the Executive Council is unable to obtain adequate clarification from the government of Sudan about its alleged use of chemical weapons in Jebel Marra, then request an on-site challenge inspection in accordance with Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

#### **TO UN AGENCIES**

- Immediately conduct an assessment mission to verify the needs of the civilian population living in Jebel Marra and those displaced by attacks in Jebel Marra in 2016.
- Take steps to ensure that survivors of attacks in Jebel Marra, including those who are currently beyond the purview of humanitarian actors, have access to adequate humanitarian assistance, including clinical care for serious injuries sustained during the recent violence and comprehensive health services for survivors of sexual violence.

#### **TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON THE HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND THE UN OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

- Conduct an investigation and publicly report, in collaboration with UNAMID or separately, into the violations of IHL and IHRL committed in Jebel Marra; if independent access is not granted, the team should investigate through interviews outside of Darfur and through other remote research methods.

#### **UN OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SUDAN**

- Call on the Government of the Republic of Sudan to allow humanitarian actors, including human rights investigators, free and unfettered access to all areas inside Jebel Marra and to all IDP camps in towns outside of Jebel Marra.

#### **TO THE SUDAN LIBERATION ARMY – ABDUL WAHID**

- Reestablish humanitarian co-ordinators, develop a strategy to encourage humanitarian agencies back into SLW/AW-controlled areas inside Jebel Marra, facilitate the unimpeded access of humanitarian actors to the civilian population living in SLA/AW-controlled areas.
- Ensure that at no point do SLA/AW operations compromise the civilian character of villages inside SLA/AW-controlled or contested territory.



Mountains of Jebel Marra outside of Dursa, central Darfur, Sudan, March 2015. ©Adriane Ohanesian

# 9. APPENDIX

The following pages show the response letter from the Sudanese Government.



**THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN**  
KABARNET RD- OFF NGONG RD  
Tel. 020-2686888, 0731 280 000, 0775 200 201  
P.O.BOX 48784-00100  
KENYA- NAIROBI

سفارة جمهورية السودان  
شارع كبار نيت - متفرع من شارع نقونق  
هاتف ٠٢٠-٢٦٨٦٨٨٨  
٠٧٢٣٥٣٣٦٥٣ ٠٧٢٢٤٧٥٥٩٩  
ص.ب ٤٨٧٨٤ - ١٠٠  
نairobi - كينيا

27<sup>th</sup> September, 2016

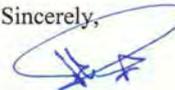
To:

L. Muthoni Wanyeki  
Regional Director for East Africa,  
The Horn and the Great Lakes,

Dear Madam,

With reference to your letter of Ref. TG AFR 54/2016.000 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2016. I would like to attach herewith a letter from H.E. Awad Hassan Elnour, Minister of Justice of the Republic of the Sudan, which reflects the response of the Government of Sudan and refuting the allegations described in your above-mentioned report.

Sincerely,

  
Elsadig Abdalla Elias  
Ambassador



Email: [embassy@sudanembassyke.org](mailto:embassy@sudanembassyke.org)

Ms. L. Muthoni Wanyeki

Regional Director for East Africa, the Horn and Great lakes

Amnesty International

Dear Madam

With reference to your letter dated 15 September 2016 concerning the situation in Jebel Marra, Central Darfur, I would like to bring to your notice the following information and comments.

Firstly, the events in Jebel Marra area occurred upon initiation by a rebel group, namely; SPA, Abdel Wahid Nour faction. This group had consistently used to attack sites and convoys of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), besides attacking more than five villages in which SAF had no presence. The attacks occurred more than 16 times during the period from August 2015 to January 2016. It is the sole armed faction that persistently refuses to engage in any negotiation or dialogue with the Government of Sudan since Abuja talks in 2004 up to Doha Document to the signing of the Road Map under the auspices of IGAD and the African Union High Level Panel on Darfur.

Secondly, the Armed forces, when addressing this issue, was carrying out its constitutional duty in protecting the citizens and preserving the integrity, security and stability of the country and the people. SAF members are subjected to intensive training courses on international humanitarian law and human rights principles. The Armed Forces Act 2007 contains provisions that make strict accountability of SAF personnel for any contravention, besides a chapter added to the Act in 2009 amendment which incorporates all the crimes under international humanitarian law.

However, upon emergence of allegations of human rights and IHL violations following the military operation, the Advisory Council for Human Rights, presided over by the Minister of justice, formed in February 2016 an independent fact-finding committee (the Committee) chaired by Ms. Attiyat Mustafa, Head of the

Unit of Combating Violence against Women to investigate such allegations. Membership of the committee comprised representatives of several relevant institutions and NGOs.

The Committee started its field work by visiting the town of Taweela in North Darfur, which received about 19,850 persons displaced by reason of the military operations in Jebel Marra. At Taweela IDPs camp, the Committee met with Jebel Marra IDPs, and the following day it visited Nertiti in Central Darfur and held a three-hour meeting with persons affected by the military operations in Jebel Marra. The interviewed persons came from different villages in central Darfur such as Golo, Rokro, Nertiti and other villages affected by the operations. The Committee designed a questionnaire form filled by the interviewed affected persons, and the information contained therein was referred to the Central Bureau of Statistics for analysis. After reviewing the condition of the affected persons and examining their narrations, the Committee concluded to the following:

- All the persons examined stated that they left their villages in Jebel Marra voluntarily for fear caused by hearing sounds of explosives.
- At Taweela IDPs camp, they expressed their intention to return to their villages before the start of the rain season, and so, they requested more assistance. They assured that SAF secured for them safe routes and some humanitarian assistance.
- They replied in the negative when asked whether they had been exposed to any attack during their movement.
- Their general health appearances looked normal, and when the committee asked them about their health condition they replied that only their children had suffered ailment due to weather change, as they moved from a mild climate to hot places.
- They mentioned that Abdel Wahid faction used to loot their belongings, impose on them tolls and torture them when they failed to pay such tolls

for about 7 years. Expressing their content of the military intervention by the Government forces, they stated that the armed groups deemed visiting towns under the control of the Government by the persons affected is a contravention to their laws, and punishable with underground detention.

- The Committee met with the Governors and senior officials of the two states of Central and North Darfur and discussed with them the complaints and concern of the persons affected, and promised to do all the possible to address the issue.

Concerning the humanitarian needs and access, the number of the persons affected by the military operation in Jebel Marra is about 119 319. About 89 villages, 29 schools and 3 health care centers had been affected. The following events have taken place:

- A High level assignment committee has been established, and an intervention plan was set out for normalization of the humanitarian situation in the area.
- The Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), Zakat Fund, Ministry of Health, National Water Project, Sudanese Red Crescent and some national NGOs made collaborative efforts to address the situation of the persons affected.
- 5 000 sacks of grain and SDG 5,000, 000 were provided by HAC, and 10, 000 food packages and 1,500 pieces of clothing by Zakat Fund, in addition to SDG 5,282,720 by Central Darfur Government for the arrangement of voluntary return of the persons affected. Shelter materials, water pumps, power generators, plastic latrines and other equipments have been provided by different partners.
- 3 hospitals and 5 health centers have been re-operated, and child vaccination campaigns, environment sanitation and an ambulance vehicle have been provided.

- The World Food Program and UNHCR continue to provide food assistances, and distributed by the Sudanese Red Crescent. Humanitarian access is available to all relevant actors both in Sortoni and Jebel Marra localities.
- 14 midwives have been deployed for each county, and 10 medical doctors have been assigned in accordance with the need priority.
- In Golo, Jaldo, Karofal, Nirtiti and Garni, 19 manual water stations have been established, and 4 wells have been drilled and equipped in East Jebel Marra locality.
- Thanks to the humanitarian interventions and arrangements performed, the number of voluntary returnees reached 81,000 persons. Return processes are still ongoing.

To conclude, I would like to assert that the evidence said to be relied on in your search findings is unreliable, contradictory and unsubstantiated. The survivors and witnesses referred to in your letter were either supporters of Abdel Wahid faction or were influenced under fear. None of UN agencies referred to as a source had shared the Government with such allegations or information.

Concerning the use of chemical weapons by SAF, we were very astonished to hear this accusation. It is the first time for us to get knowledge of such allegation which implicates a heinous humanitarian crime. It takes no effort to categorically repudiate such an assumption. No one of the persons affected interviewed by the Committee has mentioned, whether expressly or by innuendo, anything about any exposure of his or her area to a "poisonous smoke" or anything that could be suspected to be relating to a chemical substance. We may ask if the satellite imaging relied on in the report has shown Government forces wearing protecting suits and helmets against chemical weapons, as they were stood on the very ground supposed to be targeted with such weapons? It is also questionable where did the medical professionals who reported the death of the 200 people including 50 children, as there is information available to the health authorities inside the country!

Judicial institutions and law enforcement agencies are available in the area. The public Prosecutor of the Special Court of Darfur, public prosecution offices and police stations assured that no information or complaint has been received to the effect that such allegations had taken place.

Finally, I emphasize that we are keen to investigate and prosecute any allegation of human rights or IHL violation in the country perpetrated by anyone, and do never allow impunity. The prosecution offices and police stations in the area were provided with the necessary facilities and human and material resources to carry out their duty in the best way.

Sincerely

Awad Hassan Elnour  
Minister of Justice, Republic of the Sudan.

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## SUDANESE GOVERNMENT FORCES RAVAGE JEBEL MARRA, DARFUR

In January 2016, Sudanese government forces launched a large-scale military campaign in the Jebel Marra area in Darfur, Sudan. Co-ordinated ground and air attacks targeted locations throughout Jebel Marra until May. After that, the seasonal rains in Darfur intensified, making ground attacks impractical throughout most of the area; air operations continued through mid-September.

Amnesty International has documented a large number of serious violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law committed by Sudanese government forces, including the bombing of civilians and civilian property, the unlawful killing of men, women, and children, the abduction and rape of women, the forced displacement of civilians, and the looting and destruction of civilian property, including the destruction of entire villages.

Amnesty International also documented evidence that strongly suggests that Sudanese government forces repeatedly used chemical weapons during attacks in Jebel Marra.