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## Press Release

*Nuba of Sudan: Facing Ethnic Cleansing by Sudanese Armed Forces and allied Militias.*

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011 fighting broke out in Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan between Sudanese armed forces (SAF) and the SPLA forces (North Sector). The reason for the fighting is because the President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir gave order to his soldiers to disarm SPLA Joint Army Unit which had a mandate according to CPA signed in Nairobi 2005 to remain in the area until the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011. However, it is clear that the Khartoum Regime wanted to have full control over the region of South Kordofan before the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011, the day CPA come to an end. Prior to the fighting the tension has been building with the presence of heavy military presence from both sides. This increasing tension became apparent when the SPLM Northern Sector boycotted last month elections and decided not take any part in the government to be formed by Ahmed Haroun, the man who is wanted by International Criminal Court of justice, for the grave crimes he committed in Darfur.

The fighting which began in Kadugli spreads rapidly to engulf the entire Nuba Mountains region. In this conflict the government armed forces used heavy artilleries and aerial-bombardments indiscriminately in Kadugli, Dilling, Koadi, talodi areas. Many villages and properties were destroyed in many parts in the Nuba Mountains, This evidently led to more than 40,000 inhabitants of Kadugli alone fleeing for fear for their lives. Reports from the area revealed that hundred of thousands of people are now made displaced and are living in appalling conditions – no shelter, no food and no water. Also Evidence revealed that many Nuba were killed by government air-bombing, armed forces, popular defence forces and allied militias. Mines have been planted in and around Kadugli. Three civilians were killed by land mines in Alzendia (Kalimo area)south of Kadugli. A lorry was blown up by a mine in Kadugli killing 6 people. Latest reports revealed continuation of aerial bombardments in

Taferah. Hajer al-Nar, Kalimo in Kadugli, Miri, Kaiga Al-Khayil, Ladawa, Abugeibaiha, Dilling and Kauda.

Currently the search from house to house is being carried out by armed forces, popular defence forces and Arab militias. This is taking place in Kadugli and other cities, looking for Nuba SPLM members and anti regime. Those found were executed and their homes were looted and raised to the ground. It is said that people who fled the area and manage to get El-Obeid in North Kordofan were searched and the suspect people were taken away by the government agents for questioning. Those who have no relatives or friends to stay with them were taken back to the Nuba Mountains to be used as human shields. In fact the situation in the Nuba Mountains is very atrocious while the government is denying access to the international NGOs to deliver humanitarian assistance. Denying humanitarian access give the impression that the government is using food as weapon of war. It is reported that the Arab militias are given green light to arrest and to kill Nuba and to destroy their homes and villages. Many dead bodies of civilians, police men and soldiers were seen lying scattered in the centre of Kadugli Town. This increasingly looks like *a systematic ethnic cleansing campaign* conducted under the order of Ahmed Mohammed Haroun, the governor of South Kordofan who some years ago committed the same grave human rights violations in the Nuba Mountains before he was transferred to Darfur to commit another genocide and for which he is now wanted by International Criminal Court (ICC).

People who fled the towns and villages in the Nuba Mountains and arrived in El-Obeid began to tell their horrific stories and some said "We have never seen something like this in our lives. We saw many dead bodies lying along the roads from Kadugli right up to Dilling and beyond, and it looks like another Rwanda genocide that is being repeated this time in the Nuba Mountains". Ironically some of these horrific crimes are committed not far from the UNMIS Compound and in the presence of the Egyptian UN Peacekeeping Forces which failed to protect these helpless Nuba people. It appears that this Egyptian peacekeeping forces are not neutral in this case and possibly have other agenda and they should be replaced by a neutral UN peacekeeping.

Currently, a chaotic situation is happening in the entire state of South Kordofan and it is without a doubt a major humanitarian crisis has taken place in the Nuba Mountains. Tenth of thousands of children, women, elderly people are among those who fled their homes and villages are undergoing enormous problems. This displaced people are living in an appalling

conditions. They have no adequate shelters and living under the trees under heavy pouring rain and coupled with lack of food and medical care.

What is happening now in the Nuba Mountains did not come out of the blue. It was well planned and designed for a long period of time by the Khartoum Regime, as the government has armed the leaders of the Arab tribes in the region with heavy and sophisticated weapons and brought massive armed forces to South Kordofan, and there were condemnations by Nuba and many people in the Sudan. This was noted by diplomats and independent observers who predicted earlier that the outcome of the referendum may trigger enormous violence and upheaval in this region, indeed it did. The government agenda towards the Nuba people is clear, when it brought back Ahmed Mohammed Haroun, the man who was behind the grave crimes committed in impunity against the Nuba in 1990s. The man is here to complete the unfinished job and that is to ethnically cleanse the Nuba People and bring in the Arabs to take over their lands.

The Nuba Survival Foundation is condemning the government action of aerial bombardments of cities and villages across the Nuba Mountains which resulted in the displacement of hundred of thousands of Nuba people.

We call on the international community, particularly the United Nations not to turn their eyes and backs away from the Nuba crisis this time. They should act immediately now before it is too late and to avoid the repeated Rwanda genocide in the Nuba Mountains.

We call on the international community to take effective measures to stop the on-going war in the Nuba Mountains and to take into account the following points :

- . To exert pressure on the Sudanese government to halt its aerial bombardments and artillery fire immediately.
- . To enforce no fly zone over the whole areas of the Nuba Mountains.
- . To put pressure on both sides to stop the fighting and the killing of civilians and all troops to withdraw from the area and replaced by neutral UN peacekeeping force.
- . To put pressure on GoS to allow humanitarian access to the INGOs to deliver assistance to the civilian population.
- . To help in organising the return of the displaced Nuba people to their homes and villages as soon as possible and compensations should be made by the government to these people.
- . To ensure that those responsible for these crimes to be brought to justice.

Finally, the history of persecution in the Nuba Mountains has severely undermined people's faith in the future intentions of Khartoum government that is internationally accused of on - going war crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur. Currently, President Al-Bashir and Ahmed Haroun are both wanted by ICC for *genocidal crimes* they committed in Sudan.

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