

UNITED NATIONS PRESS RELEASE



UN Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect on the Situation in South Kordofan State, Sudan

(New York – 7 September 2011) Francis Deng, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, and Edward Luck, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, are gravely concerned at reports of continued attacks on civilian populations in Southern Kordofan, Sudan, and have called for their immediate cessation.

According to independent sources, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) have continued aerial bombardments in Southern Kordofan, particularly in the Nuba mountains region, resulting in further killing and displacement of the civilian population. Latest reports indicate that the violence has spilled over into neighbouring Blue Nile state resulting in tens of thousands of civilians fleeing to neighbouring states and across the border into Ethiopia.

“We remind the Government of Sudan of its responsibility to protect its populations – irrespective of their ethnic, religious or political affiliation – from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity,” said the Special Advisers. “Heads of State and Government made a commitment to this principle in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and in subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.”

The preliminary report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued on 15 August, found that attacks against civilians as a result of the fighting between the SAF and Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement – North (SPLM – North) may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Special Advisers urge the Government of Sudan to investigate the alleged crimes and to hold accountable all those responsible, including for their incitement. “If the Government is unable to do so, it should allow a prompt international investigation into the ongoing attacks against the civilian population in Southern Kordofan,” said Special Advisers Deng and Luck.

The Special Advisers, affirming the recent statement of the United Nations Secretary-General, called on both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM – North to grant immediate and unhindered access of humanitarian agencies to the whole state of Southern Kordofan in order to provide urgently needed assistance to the population.

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