



### **Civilians in Kordofan Suffer from Airstrikes**

## **Civilians Killed and Injured in Abu Zabad, West Kordofan, and Medical Services Collapse**

**July 16, 2025**

Since early July 2025, Abu Zabad town in West Kordofan State has been subjected to successive airstrikes by Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) aircrafts and near-daily drone strikes. These attacks have resulted in numerous civilian deaths and injuries, while the humanitarian and medical situation in the town is deteriorating sharply, according to local sources.

Abu Zabad, located approximately 180 km southwest of El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan State, hosts large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Habila, Dilling, Um Rawaba, Al Rahad, Dabanga, Al Dbeibat, Al Nahoud, Al-Khiwai, Khartoum, and Madani, particularly women and children. The increasing number of IDPs struggles with a shortage of medical supplies in the town's hospital, which lacks medicines, IV fluids, and resuscitation equipment as well as medical personnel. The death toll is expected to rise due to serious injuries and lack of supplies.

The escalation reached its peak on Thursday, July 10, and Friday, July 11, when attacks targeted IDP shelters and residential neighborhoods, killing 15 people and wounding many more. On July 10, an airstrike carried out by SAF hit the IDP shelter hosted at Osama Bin Zaid School in the Al-Rub' Al-Awal neighborhood, as well as the shelter at Al-Wifaq School in Imtidad Al-Waha neighborhood, in addition to neighboring homes. This airstrike resulted in the deaths of eight people, ranging in age from 5 to 60, from both IDPs and residents. They were: Sikirtaira Al Basha Hassan, 60, female IDP from Habila; Mariam Balila Al-Wakil, 45, female IDP from Habila; Nasreen Mirghani Ahmed, 19, female IDP from Omdurman; Hanan Gadim, 19, female IDP from Omdurman; Ismail Abdel Hamid Al-Hajj, 16, male local resident; Ibrahim, 16 years old, male; Mustafa Abdel Hamid Al-Hajj, 5 years old, male, local resident; and Mustafa Ibrahim Mustafa, 12 years old, male local resident of the town. Reports also mentioned the names of six wounded, including three girls and a woman.

On Friday, July 11, SAF targeted Al-Waha Extension, a residential neighborhood in the center of the town, by dropping four explosive barrels. Seven people were killed, including three IDP women from Dilling and four residents of Abu Zabad. Several others were injured, some sustaining serious injuries.

In another tragic incident on Monday, July 14, 2025, in Abu Galib in Abu Zabad locality, a residence belonging to the citizen Abdullah Shalabi Abdullah was bombed by airstrikes. Reports verified by the Sudanese SHRM indicated that the raid resulted in the deaths of four family members and neighbors, three of whom were children. Eyewitnesses reported that the same aircraft dropped another barrel bomb on a football ground in the village center.

This increasing and uncontrolled use of drones and aerial bombing in military operations reflects a clear failure to distinguish between civilian and military targets - a flagrant violation of international

humanitarian law and customary international law. It increases the suffering of the civilian population and undermines the chances of their protection in the context of the ongoing conflict.

The targeting of civilian objects, civilians, and centers known to be shelters for IDPs is a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocol II of 1977 applicable in non-international armed conflicts, particularly Article 13, which requires the general protection of civilians from the dangers arising from military operations. Article 14 also requires the protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

These widespread and systematic crimes require an urgent investigation by the SAF. These crimes may amount to war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, especially since they were characterized by repetition and the deliberate targeting of densely populated areas.

**SHRM** calls for an urgent international investigation and for the warring parties to allow the UN International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) to visit the area and document these violations. SHRM also calls on all concerned parties to pressure the warring parties to adhere to the principles of international humanitarian law and customary international law and to immediately stop targeting civilians and IDP shelters.

We call on aid organizations, especially the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Red Cross, to take urgent action and send and facilitate sending medical aid to Abu Zabad Hospital and negotiate with the combatants to open humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of critical cases.

## **Background**

These attacks come amid a deteriorating security situation in Kordofan as a whole. Fighting between the SAF and the RSF has been accompanied by widespread violations in towns and villages in the region. The OCHA reported brutal attacks on villages in Bara locality in North Kordofan State between July 10 and 13, killing at least 300 people, including children and pregnant women. It also expressed concern about renewed shelling in El Obeid, the state's capital city, deepening fears and insecurity among civilians. Reports received by the SHRM also indicate that Kordofan region is witnessing an alarming increase in the use of drones by the two warring forces - the SAF and the RSF - during May, June, and July, resulting in heavy civilian casualties, particularly in populated areas. Civilian infrastructure was also damaged. Reports highlighted several cases of aerial bombardment, in which children, women, and elderly IDPs and residents were killed. Drone attacks also targeted a hospital in El Obeid and other civilian sites.

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