

# OUT OF SIGHT: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ETHNIC TARGETING IN THE NUBA MOUNTAINS / SOUTH KORODOFAN

## DISCLAIMER

This report has been compiled by the Adala Project, a collective youth from the Nuba mountains /South Kordofan dedicated to the defense of human rights through the documentation of violations and the pursuit of justice and accountability for survivors. The findings, testimonies, and analysis presented herein are based on firsthand accounts, open-source investigations, and the collaborative efforts of local volunteers and human rights defenders operating under challenging and often dangerous conditions.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, credibility, and integrity of the information, the volatile nature of the conflict and restrictions on access to affected areas means that some incidents may remain underreported or unverified. The content of this report reflects the knowledge and circumstances available at the time of writing.

We extend our deepest gratitude to SIHA Network for its unwavering support in the production of this report and for its vital role in aiding survivors of violence and displacement.

This report is intended for informational and advocacy purposes only. The views expressed are those of the Adala Project and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of supporting organizations.

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# THE FORGOTTEN ATROCITIES: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ETHNIC TARGETING IN NUBA MOUNTAINS/SOUTH KORDOFAN

## KEY FINDINGS

- The conflict has displaced thousands of people in Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan, disrupted agriculture, and triggered famine.
- Education and healthcare systems have collapsed, with diseases spreading due to medical shortages.
- International organizations have documented grave human rights abuses, including sexual violence, forced displacement, and ethnic targeting.
- Rape has been systematically weaponized to terrorize civilians.
- Government restrictions on humanitarian access have amplified suffering, with aid workers facing arrest and violence.
- With the onset of war in April 2023, the humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan worsened, as attacks on civilians continued—particularly by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which hindered agricultural activities largely carried out by women. Widespread cases of rape, killing, and abduction were documented.
- The report emphasizes the urgent and immediate need for measures to protect civilians, achieve justice for victims and survivors, and put an end to the culture of impunity.

## INTRODUCTION

This report, compiled by the Adala Project, documents systematic conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and the ethnic targeting of civilians in Sudan's Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan region between April 2023 and January 2025. Its purpose is to expose atrocities exacerbated by Sudan's wider war, focusing on the deliberate use of rape, abduction, and starvation as weapons against the Nuba people—particularly women, girls, and farming communities. The scope of the report covers escalating violence following the beginning of the conflict in April 2023, including humanitarian blockades, village massacres, and the collapse of civilian protection.

To overcome information blackouts and access restrictions, the methodology combines survivor testimonies, eyewitness accounts, insights from mental health professionals, and rigorous open-source intelligence (OSINT) verification. This multi-faceted approach cross-references firsthand narratives with social media evidence, satellite data, and public records to substantiate patterns of war crimes and crimes against humanity. By centering survivor voices and contextualizing trauma, the report seeks to break the silence around these forgotten atrocities, demand accountability for perpetrators, and urge immediate international intervention to protect civilians, ensure justice, and restore humanitarian access.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan region lies in the southern part of Kordofan State, bordered by North Kordofan, White Nile State, West Kordofan and South Sudan. The area is one of Sudan's most culturally and demographically diverse regions.

Kadugli serves as the administrative capital, while Dilling is among its most prominent cities. Alongside Talodi, Abu Jibeiha, and Al-Abbasiyya—all vital to the region's social and political fabric.



*A map showing the Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan region*

For decades, South Kordofan has endured protracted conflict, marked by systematic human rights violations, including sexual violence, forced displacement, and ethnic targeting. Despite sporadic international attention, peace efforts have been feeble, leaving the region marred with violence and marginalization. With the escalation of war in 2023, the humanitarian crisis deepened, while the international community failed to mount an effective response to protect civilians from relentless suffering.

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) seizure of multiple areas in the 1990s further inflamed tensions between local populations and the central government,<sup>1</sup> which deployed Arabized pastoralist militias (Marahil) and jihadist groups to target civilians. These campaigns escalated into ethnic cleansing,<sup>2</sup> including sexual violence, enslavement, and other atrocities documented by international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International.

By 1993,<sup>3</sup> this tension in South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains triggered mass displacement, forcing thousands to flee. Many sought refuge in caves or remote areas to escape aerial bombardments and ground assaults, while others became internally displaced or crossed into neighboring countries—South Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya—where camps like Yida, Ajoung Thok, Kriandongo, and Kakuma continue to house survivors from this period to current date. Those unable to escape were forced into so-called 'peace camps.'<sup>4</sup> Civilians in these camps endured torture, rape, and starvation at the hands of SAF and RSF soldiers when they were allies.

In Yida, Ajoung Thok, Kriandongo, and Kakuma is where the Nuba people sought refuge, fleeing conflict and persecution in Sudan's South Kordofan region.<sup>5</sup> Yida camp, located near the border neighboring South Sudan,<sup>6</sup> came into existence in 2011. Over 30,000 refugees fled into Yida during the first year of the second war in 2011 though living conditions remain harsh due to overcrowding and limited

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<sup>1</sup>De Waal, Alex. "Averting Genocide in the Nuba Mountains." (Social Science Research Council, 2006), available at: <https://items.ssrc.org/how-genocides-end/averting-genocide-in-the-nuba-mountains-sudan/>.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

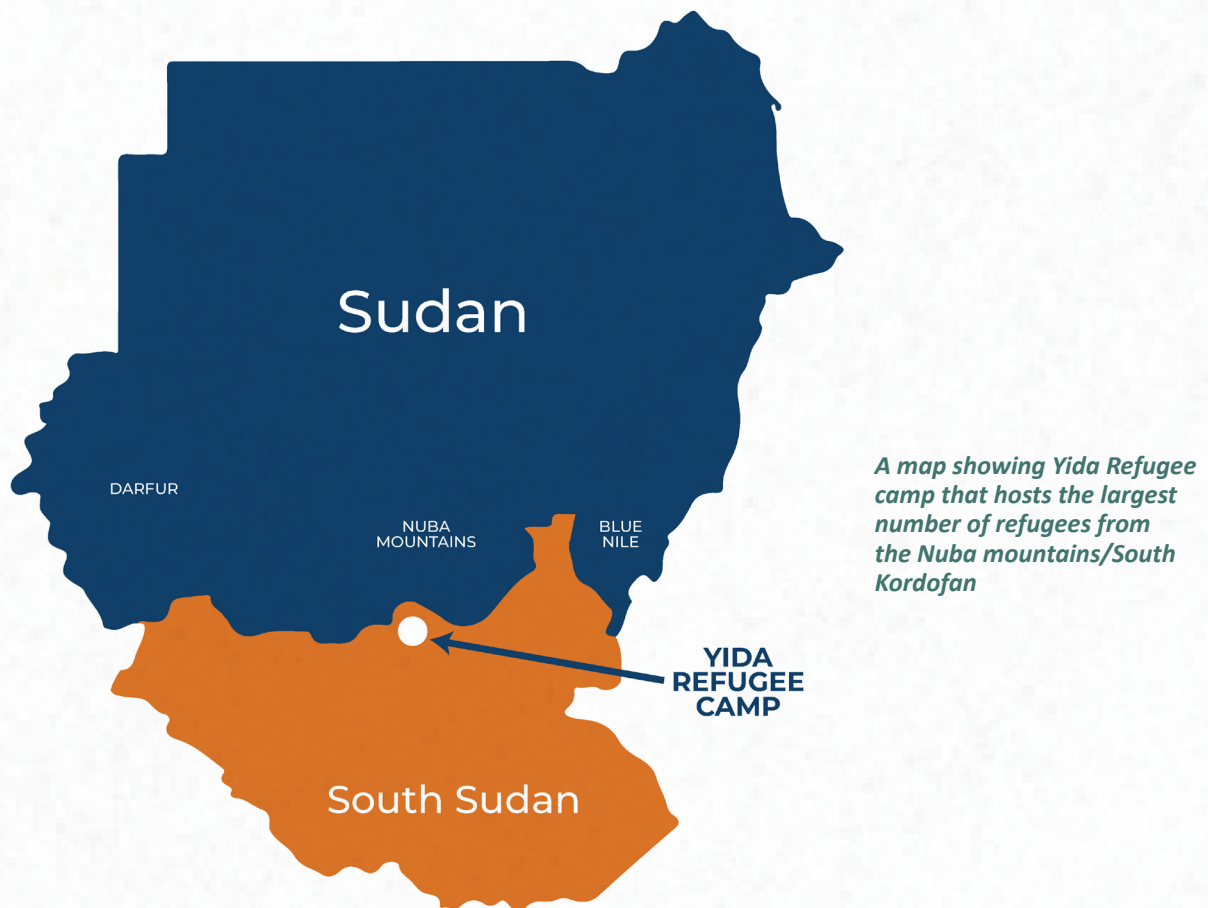
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Yida Refugee Camp." (Operation Broken Silence, 2023), available at: <https://operationbrokensilence.org/blog/yida-refugee-camp>.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

resources.<sup>7</sup> By January 2013, Yida's population had swelled to over 70,000 people, and little progress had been made regarding the camp's humanitarian and security challenges. After the breakout of the war in April 2023, roughly 200,000 people from Khartoum and other areas fled into Nuba SPLM-North (SPLM-N) controlled areas and Yida Refugee Camp.<sup>8</sup> Ajoung Thok, established in 2013, offers slightly better infrastructure but struggles with food shortages and inadequate health-care. Pamir (Kriannndongo) in Uganda and Kakuma in Kenya also shelter Nuba refugees, though they face challenges such as limited livelihood opportunities, prolonged displacement, and reliance on dwindling humanitarian aid.



<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> "Nuba Mountains." (*Operation Broken Silence*, 2023), available at: <https://operationbrokensilence.org/blog/the-nuba-mountains>.



In 2011, following South Sudan's independence, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement stipulated popular consultations for the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile regions, granting them semi-autonomous status.<sup>9</sup> However, fighting reignited after the Al-Bashir regime reneged on these commitments. Between 2011 and 2016, the Nuba Mountains suffered violence from SAF and the Bashir regime, allied with affiliated Arab militias.<sup>10</sup> Kadugli, in particular, witnessed mass killings of youth associated with the SPLM. The State Government, then led by Ahmed Haroun (indicted for war crimes in Darfur), carried out widespread purges of local leaders, resulting in 350,000 people.<sup>11</sup> The Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan also lost vast agricultural lands to the war. Recurrent clashes and artillery attacks on civilian areas—villages, markets, farms—have exacted a heavy toll over the years. Christian minorities in the Nuba Mountains and South Kordofan faced religious persecution,<sup>12</sup> specifically targeted by the Al-Bashir regime and the National Congress Party (NCP), which rejected religious and cultural pluralism. Both the Government and the SPLM were accused of recruiting child soldiers.<sup>13</sup>

Following the December Revolution, Sudan's transitional Prime Minister visited the Nuba Mountains and met with the SPLM-N leader.<sup>14</sup> Yet, politically, little changed. Economically, living conditions worsened, and sexual violence against women and girls surged—including early marriages in rural and SPLM-controlled areas, exacerbated by lack of education and decades of militarization.- militia violence against civilians persisted.

The international response has been largely silent or ineffective in addressing the humanitarian and human rights crisis in the Nuba Mountains. While some aid organizations attempted interventions, Government restrictions and ongoing

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> "Sudan: Crisis and Conditions in Southern Kordofan." (Human Rights Watch, 2012), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/04/sudan-crisis-conditions-southern-kordofan>.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> "Sudan: Events of 2017." (Human Rights Watch, 2018), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/sudan>.

<sup>13</sup> "Sudan Claims SPLM-N Recruited 900 Children from South Kordofan, Calls for UNICEF Intervention." (Sudan Tribune, 2012) available at: <https://sudantribune.com/article40655/> see also "Sudan Accused of Recruiting 3,000 Minors in South Kordofan." (Radio Tamazuj, 2014), available at: <https://www.radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/sudan-accused-of-recruiting-more-than-3-000-minors-in-south-kordofan>.

<sup>14</sup> Werr, Patrick. "Sudan's PM Visits Rebel Strong Hold in Kordofan on Peace Mission." (Reuters, 2020), available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/sudans-pm-visits-rebel-stronghold-in-kordofan-on-peace-mission-idUSKB-N1Z8236/>.



conflict has obstructed their efforts. Despite well-documented atrocities, justice and accountability remains elusive, as armed groups continue to dominate the region.

With Sudan's war erupting in April 2023, instability in South Kordofan intensified. Though the conflict centered on Khartoum and Darfur, the Nuba Mountains were not spared. The fighting exacerbated humanitarian crises, disrupted agriculture, and obstructed aid, deepening food insecurity as will be explored below

## NUBA MOUNTAINS/SOUTH KORDOFAN IN CONTEXT: THE PRESENT WAR IN SUDAN

The current war in Sudan, marked the beginning of further atrocities in South Kordofan. In June 2023, fighting reached the Nuba Mountains' western zones, escalating into fierce battles around Kadugli and Dalanj, with RSF joining the fray. Further, by the end of December 2023, the RSF launched an attack on Habila locality in South Kordofan. The villages of Tarda, Tonoql, Wata, Fiyo, Al-Zaltaya, and Gardoud Abu Al-Dakir were subjected to a brutal assault by the RSF, resulting in the killing of civilians, including women and children. Homes were burned. The villages of Fiyo, Al-Zaltaya and Rujul Altabaludi were completely burned down. Properties, crops, and livestock were also looted.

These events triggered a severe wave of displacement, with a total of 9,894 displaced individuals (1,596 families), and 52 people reported missing. On February 9, 2024,<sup>15</sup> the RSF launched another violent attack on villages inhabited by peaceful Nuba farming communities in the Tanaql and Al-Zaltaya areas. This attack led to the killing of seven (7) young men and the abduction of thirteen (13) girls.<sup>16</sup> According to later reports by local activists the girls, who range between 17 to 30 years old, had taken to Al-Goaz locality, an area under RSF control.

According to a Human Rights Watch report,<sup>17</sup> fighters from the RSF and allied mili-

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<sup>15</sup> "RSF Atrocities Persist Unabated in South Kordofan and Nuba Mountains." (SIHA Network, 2024) available at: <https://sihanet.org/rsf-atrocities-persist-unabated-in-south-kordofan-and-nuba-mountains/>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "Sudan: Fighters Rape Women and Girls, Hold Sex Slaves." (Human Rights Watch, 2024) available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/15/sudan-fighters-rape-women-and-girls-hold-sex-slaves>.

tias have also raped seventy-nine (79) women and girls, subjecting them to ongoing sexual slavery from September 2023 to current date. Most of the documented crimes were cases of rape that occurred after December 31, 2023, in the town of Habila and surrounding areas,<sup>18</sup> including an RSF base. Victims and survivors also came from the town of Fiyo, located about 17 kilometers south of Habila locality.

Following this, the city of Dilling also witnessed widespread violence. The RSF launched a retaliatory campaign in response to SAF's execution of military members in its own rank accused of working as informers for the RSF in Dilling. The retaliation involved killing and the ethnic targeting of civilians in Dilling. According to Adala sources on the ground, between December 2023 and December 2024, the RSF assaulted several of women in Dilling, though specific numbers remain unconfirmed.

During the first half of January 2024, eyewitness testimonies and open-source videos shared on social media—including some posted by RSF members themselves—revealed that the RSF was committing horrific war crimes and CRSV against women and girls across the state. These crimes occurred in Dilling city, Habila, rural Habila, the Six Mountains Villages (Kururu, Al-Kadro, Kurtala, Al-Dabatna) in addition to Kuldagi kafir, Lagawa, Abu Junuk, Al-Abbasiya, Al-Zaltaya, Tanqal, Wata, Gardoud Abu Al-dakir, among other areas.

## DOCUMENTED PATTERNS AND CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, GIRLS AND OTHER CIVILIANS

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Throughout this report, we have documented numerous cases of sexual violence in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan. The patterns of sexual violence vary, ranging from assaults on roads and farms to abductions and sexual slavery. The cases we documented represent only a tip of the iceberg, as many incidents remain undocumented for several reasons—most notably the difficulty in obtaining information due to the prevailing culture of stigmatization or challenges in reaching

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<sup>18</sup> "Sudan: War Crimes in South Kordofan." (Human Rights Watch, 2024) available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/10/sudan-war-crimes-south-kordofan>.

victims. Many of these atrocities were also committed in villages lacking basic services such as internet access or telephone connectivity.

Between May 2023 and January 2025, Adala, through its network of volunteers, has been able to document approximately twenty-three (23) cases of sexual violence in South Kordofan. Of these, eleven (11) women were abducted and raped—eight (8) from the village of Tanaqal and three from the city of Dilling. Additionally, twelve (12) women were raped, beaten, and verbally abused; three (3) of these cases were from Al-Goaz locality (Al-Dibaybat), one from Al-Ayara, four (4) from Hajar Al-Jawad, and four (4) from Dilling.

Five (5) other cases involved physical assault accompanied by racial slurs—two (2) of the survivors were from Lagawa and three (3) from Dilling. Moreover, reports indicated eighteen (18) abduction cases from the city of Dilling, of which Adala has officially confirmed and documented four (4) so far.

## **ABDUCTION**

Many women and girls have also been abducted by the RSF and allied militias. We were able to document several cases in the villages of Tanqal and Dilling, where women are abducted and taken to Al-Goz locality. There, they are subjected to all forms of abuse and forced to live under horrific conditions.

On December 11, 2023, two (2) women (aged 50 and 30) were assaulted near Ligawa farmlands, close to Al-Saraf cemetery, by eight (8) masked men in RSF uniforms. They endured whipping, rifle butt blows to the back and head, racial slurs, and verbal abuse during the six-hour attack (9 AM to 3 PM).

On Friday, December 29, 2024, a group of fifteen (15) armed members of the RSF abducted more than eighteen (18) women, including the elderly. The incident took place near the Hajar Ad-Dalib area on the outskirts of Dilling, specifically to the north of the city, near the border with Al-Dibaybat—where the RSF command headquarters for South Kordofan is located.

The women were accused of espionage and were subjected to various forms of abuse, including attempted rape and threats that they would be burned alive. The incident occurred while the women were out collecting firewood and wild fruit. The RSF released them the following day, and upon their return to Dilling, they were immediately taken by military intelligence for interrogation.



On March 14, 2024, eight women (8) aged between 17 to 43 years old were abducted while traveling through a rural area of Habila. Some were subjected to rape, beatings, and threats at gunpoint. They were later released following negotiations between a local village elder and a commander from the RSF.

In Dilling, multiple cases of violent assaults by suspected RSF members have been reported. On November 10, 2023, a 26-year-old woman was held captive for four (4) days inside her home in the Al-Ma'asir neighborhood, where she was subjected to beatings, rifle butt strikes, and death threats. She was also forcibly separated from her four-month-old infant. The attackers were five (5) armed men affiliated to the RSF.

## **ROADSIDE ASSAULTS, ATTACKS ON CHILDREN, AND ABDUCTION**

On December 29, 2024, four (4) RSF soldiers assaulted three (3) women, aged 23, 45, and 55, around 8:00 a.m. in the Hajar Ad-Dalib area. Two (2) of the women were beaten, while the third faced an attempted rape, accompanied by verbal racial abuse. Additionally, the RSF abducted and assaulted three (3) siblings—aged between 6 to 12 years old, including one girl—from the village of Salji in South Kordofan while they were foraging for wild fruit near the town of Al-Dibaybat. The children were held for six (6) days before being released.

Furthermore, on Friday, October 1, 2025, a 13-year-old boy was assaulted while gathering wild fruits in the Hajar Al-Jawad area, south of Dilling - a region under the control of SPLM. The child was raped at gunpoint and beaten by soldiers affiliated with the SPLM/N. The perpetrator was armed with an AK-47, accompanied by two (2) other individuals—one armed with another AK-47 and the other, a machine gun.

In the same area, a 45-year-old woman was raped by SPLM/N forces. The assault occurred at gunpoint, with the victim subjected to physical violence and beatings while foraging for wild fruits on the outskirts of Hajar Al-Jawad village.

In Dilling, three (3) cases of rape have been documented. A 25, 28- and 74 year-old women were sexually assaulted on July 14, 2024, on a farm in the outskirts of the city, where they were held for an entire day by eight (8) RSF members. The 74-year-old woman was released after screaming hysterically during the assault and she managed to alert the village to save the two remaining women.

On December 29, 2023, a 45-year-old woman from Ktla was also raped and beaten by four (4) RSF members in Hajar Aldelyb, near Dilling, at 8 AM.

## **ETHNIC TARGETING OF CIVILIANS**

Women and girls from Nuba communities have further been targeted as part of an ethnic violence campaign designed to intimidate and subjugate these populations. All documented rape cases involving women and girls – particularly among farming communities and those displaced in areas like Tanqal and Zalataiya – Habila ,Lagawa Dilling have exclusively affected Nuba groups. This is as a result of the legacy of ethnic based terror, discrimination and harassment perpetrated by Arab militia under the Al Bashir regime, which continues under the RSF at current date, systematically targeting non-Arab tribes.

On November 28, 2024, an RSF unit comprising of three (3) pickup trucks mounted with heavy weapons attacked agricultural projects in the villages of Kururu, Kafir, and Kadru. The assailants killed three (3) young men and looted their property.

In a separate incident in March 2024, RSF forces assaulted a group of civilians from Kururu village who were traveling to North Kordofan State (Rahad locality). The attack resulted in two (2) fatalities and looting of their possessions as they crossed the Salamat village route.

These repeated RSF attacks against farming communities in the Nuba Mountains constitute a deliberate strategy to starve these populations, using hunger as a weapon to subjugate non- Arab agricultural communities.

Following the SPLM-N's recent offensive on Kadugli on August 11, 2023—which allowed them to establish control over the eastern sector of the city for over a year and a half—clashes erupted between SAF and the SPLM-N in the early hours of February 3, 2025, at 6:00 a.m. SPLM-N deployed heavy artillery during the engagement, resulting in the deaths of approximately forty-one (41) civilians, including twenty –nine (29) women and girls aged 10 to 65. The attack also left around forty-eight (48) civilians injured, thirty-one (31) of whom were women and girls between the ages of 3 and 54 years old.

## SHRINKING OF CIVIC SPACE

On April 21, 2025, Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Fadlallah Abdel Qadir Abu Kandi issued an official directive ordering the immediate suspension of activities for twenty (20) national and international organizations operating in South Kordofan State. The affected organizations include groups working in emergency relief, women's rights advocacy, peacebuilding, and development initiatives.

Two weeks prior to this decision, authorities in Dilling escalated their crackdown by arresting a member of the Dilling Emergency Room—a volunteer-led community initiative—for interrogation. This marked a clear signal of growing hostility toward civil society actors and foreshadowed the broader suspension order.

Then, on Saturday, May 3, 2025, military intelligence arrested four (4) members of the Central Kadugli Emergency Room. These arrests of civil society activists and the ban on humanitarian organizations came amid a worsening crisis, with local communities heavily reliant on these groups for food, medical aid, and protection services.

This decision forms part of a broader strategy to suppress dissenting voices, obstruct accountability mechanisms, and consolidate control over crisis-affected regions. Unless this approach is confronted, it will likely expand to other areas of Sudan, posing a grave threat to civilian safety and the country's stability.

The ongoing atrocities and deliberate targeting of civilians—particularly women—in South Kordofan represent a continuation of the brutal campaign of violence against civilians across Sudan, especially in South Kordofan, where these acts have systematically risen to the level of war crimes, crimes against humanity and potentially, even genocide. Incidentally, Commissioner Abu Kandi had previously worked alongside Ahmed Haroun, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur.

Since the outbreak of war, South Kordofan has endured countless atrocities, transforming into a perilous zone for women, who face relentless targeting for sexual exploitation and other horrific abuses.

The war has significantly transformed Al-Qoaz locality—particularly Al-Dibaybat town, located about 60 kilometers from Dilling—into a ghost town where all forms of violations against women are systematically committed. Women are now being abducted from other areas and brought to this town, which has descended into complete lawlessness. Civilians face brutal rights violations under the barrel of a



gun, and local sources report the forced displacement of long-standing communities, including the Kenana tribe .

Today, the town lies at the mercy of militias, with no security or safety for women. As rape cases surge, unsafe abortions have also spiked—leading to the death of many women, according to local sources. This has further triggered the outbreak of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

As conditions in the town continue to deteriorate, many civilians have attempted to flee for their lives—only to face imposed restrictions by authorities blocking their escape and forcibly trapping them through violent means. Meanwhile, a complete information blackout has been enforced regarding the status of civilians, leaving them entirely at the mercy of the RSF, effectively held hostage in their own city. The situation in South Kordofan demands urgent intervention to halt systematic violations against civilians. The time has come to put an end to this culture of impunity, hold perpetrators accountable, and deliver justice to victims.

The abduction of women and girls in Habila locality and rural South Kordofan is inextricably linked to the long history of atrocities committed by the RSF and tribal militias—groups with a decade-long record of brutalizing settled communities in these areas. Their campaign of terror was enabled by the NCP Al-Bashir's regime, which not only empowered the RSF but formally institutionalized them through the creation of the RSF. The scale of violations has expanded dramatically since the outbreak of war on April 15, 2023. The political alliance forged in Nairobi between SPLM-N under Al-Hilu's leadership and the RSF poses an existential threat to unarmed civilians in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan region – particularly to women and girls<sup>19</sup>. This pact is not merely a military alliance,<sup>20</sup> but a coalition uniting two (2) armed factions with extensive histories of human rights violations, foreshadowing a horrific escalation of systematic violence against innocent civilians, especially women.

On one hand, the RSF carry a well-documented legacy of atrocities—including recent systematic mass atrocities in Habila locality that claimed dozens of women and civilians. On the other hand, SPLM-N is implicated in egregious violations,

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19 “SPLM-N and RSF Forge Alliance in Nairobi: Implications for Sudan’s Civil War.” (African Security Analysis, 2025), available at: <https://www.africansecurityanalysis.org/updates/splm-n-and-rsf-forge-alliance-in-nairobi-implications-for-sudan-s-civil-war>.

20 “Political Developments Threaten to Reignite Fighting in Nuba Mountains.” (Sudan War Monitor, 2025), available at: <https://sudanwarmonitor.com/p/splm-rsf-nairobi-conference>.

such as the recent events in Hajar Al-Jawad, Kadugli and the 2024 assaults on Abu Zaid and Almatar neighborhoods in Dilling.

Women in the Nuba Mountains now face compounded dangers in this context, enduring systematic sexual violence, abduction, and organized enslavement. The horrific scenes witnessed in Habila locality—including widespread rape and sexual slavery—offers but a glimpse of what awaits women, girls, and civilians across South Kordofan should this military alliance solidify.

As this report is being finalized, the atrocities continue unabated: women in South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains still suffer murder, rape, and torture. These acts of sexual violence constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, underscoring the urgent need for decisive international action to protect civilians and deliver justice.

The humanitarian situation in South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains has reached a critical level due to escalating violence and severe restrictions on access to humanitarian aid. Between June 12-14, 2025, nearly 11,000 people fled ten (10) villages in Al-Qoz locality, joining over 9,000 previously displaced since late May 2025. Many have sought refuge in Shikan (North Kordofan) and other parts of South and West Kordofan, while those remaining face dire conditions.

Today Kadugli and Dilling are under an armed siege by the RSF and SPLM-N (al-Hilu faction) this has triggered systematic looting, terrorization of civilians, road blockades, and obstruction of humanitarian aid. Over two (2) million civilians now risk losing basic survival necessities—shelter, food, clean water, and medicine—with reports of grave human rights violations. The Adala Project stresses the urgent need for unrestricted access to protect displaced and trapped populations, warning of catastrophic consequences if aid remains blocked.

The international community's silence and inaction in the face of these atrocities serve as implicit encouragement for these forces to continue their crimes. The time has come to speak out unequivocally: the lives of thousands of civilians—especially women and children—hang by a thread, and every delayed response translates into more innocent victims.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

What is occurring in the Nuba Mountains/ South Kordofan constitutes systematic ethnic cleansing , where the bodies of women and girls are being weaponized as instruments of this eradication campaign.

We therefore call on the regional, international community, particularly the UN, the African Union (AU), key development and humanitarian partners to:

1. Urgently intervene in Sudan and specifically in Nuba Mountains/ South Kordofan to halt the ongoing atrocity crimes in the area. Under the UN and the AU, this would be in line with the collective responsibility to protect noting the Government of Sudan's inability or unwillingness to adequately protect civilians in the course of this conflict. Under the AU's Constitutive Act, this collective power is provided for under Article 4(h).
2. Work towards achieving a permanent ceasefire and reaching a comprehensive peace agreement between the warring parties.
3. Strengthen the presence of international peacekeeping forces in the region with a clear mandate to provide civilian protection, particularly for women and children facing sexual violence and ethnic targeting. Additionally, we call for the establishment of safe zones for civilians living under constant threat of violence.
4. Conduct independent and comprehensive investigations into the war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide being committed in the region, including sexual violence and ethnic targeting.
5. Establish an African-led international mechanism or tribunal to address the atrocity crimes being committed, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide which would hold perpetrators – whether from the RSF, SAF or other allied militia accountable, ending impunity.
6. Impose targeted international sanctions on all parties involved in systematic violations against the people of the Nuba Mountains, including:
  - The Sudanese Armed Forces for the documented atrocities the committed between 2011-2016;
  - Post-2023 war violations committed by the SPLM-North (Al-Hilu's faction);
  - Ongoing systematic abuses by the RSF and allied militias.



7. Support local and international civil society organizations working in South Kordofan by ensuring secure humanitarian aid routes and empowering grass-roots associations that document violations, provide survivor support, and protect human rights activists and journalists exposing abuses. This can be through the provision of comprehensive victim services such as medical and psychological care for sexual violence survivors, reproductive health services, and psychosocial support programs, along with establishing safe centers offering trauma rehabilitation, legal assistance to pursue justice and access to telecommunication services such as internet to address the information black out in this area.
8. Increase media and international attention on the humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains, while ensuring continuous documentation of violations. Encourage international organizations to issue periodic reports on the situation in the region to maintain sustained global pressure.

## CONCLUSION

This report, as compiled by the Adala Project traces the systematic conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) against women and girls together with the ethnic targeting of civilians in Sudan's Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan region by the RSF between April 2023 and January 2025. This report outlines the historical backdrop of violence in this region, which has persisted since the Al-Bashir regime and situates this in the context of the current war in Sudan. In doing so, it examines the continued cycles of impunity which have existed and which drive the current campaign of war crimes, crimes against humanity and potentially genocide being leveled against civilians in this region. This report uncovers in depth patterns and documented cases of sexual violence, abductions, roadside attacks, ethnic targeting and the shrinking civil space perpetrated by the RSF, its allied militia and key government actors which embolden their actions. It then ends with pointed recommendations on how critical international and regional actors such as the UN, AU and development partners can intervene to protect civilian life on South Kordofan. With astounding levels of instability, food insecurity, limited access to shelter, clean water, medical and psychosocial support in a context with growing displacement, a dire communication black out and prevalent violence against women and girls, this report embodies the silent cries of the people in this region to be seen, heard and assisted with the immediacy they deserve.



VOICES FOR JUSTICE & HOPE FOR SUDAN

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