

# *Sudan Update from Brad Phillips*



October 5, 2011

*Note from Pastor Kevin Lea follows this article.*

Dear friends of the persecuted,

I know I have been sending you a lot of emails lately. The reason is because I know you have invested a lot of your time and treasure into not only acquainting yourself with the ongoing tragedy that is the Republic of Sudan, but helping PPF engage in “active compassion for the persecuted.”

I have always been impressed with Smith College Professor and Sudan Expert, Eric Reeves, who is not only a good writer but someone with a contextual understanding of all the various factors contributing to the present crisis in Sudan.

I recently read Eric’s latest article about the impending military assault on the Blue Nile State city of Kurmuk by the terrorist-led government in Khartoum. I think the article does an excellent job of explaining why the Sudanese government is acting so aggressively. Sudan is in a lot of trouble. Unsustainable debt, rampant inflation, and food shortages are just a few of the major problems facing the government of indicted war criminal Omar al Bashir. Often during times of economic crisis, war is indeed “the health of the state.”

I have enclosed important sections of Prof. Reeve’s article along with a link to the complete copy that I think is required reading for people keeping tabs on events taking place in Sudan’s latest war of genocide and ethnic cleansing. I hope you find it informative and helpful as you determine the level of your own involvement in this tragedy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad".

Bradford Phillips  
President  
Persecution Project Foundation



*SAF troops are poised to invade the Blue Nile State stronghold of Kurmuk.*

*Blue Nile's Kurmuk could be another bloodbath in Sudan*

By Eric Reeves

September 28, 2011 - In a matter of days, or hours, the northern Sudanese state of Blue Nile seems likely to be the scene of the most violent military confrontation in Sudan for almost a decade. The Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) released a highly alarming report on September 23, based on substantial satellite photography, indicating that armed forces of Khartoum's National Islamic Front/National Congress Party regime are mobilizing in a massive formation of armor, troops, and military aircraft: "heavily camouflaged, mechanized units comprising at least a brigade---3,000 troops or more;" "these forces appear to be equipped with heavy armor and artillery, supported by helicopter gunships."

The apparent target of this huge assault is the town of Kurmuk---on the border with Ethiopia---which is the primary stronghold of the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement-North (SPLA/M-N) in Blue Nile. These are the northern military units and political cadres of the broader movement known during the civil war (1983-2005) simply as the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement; their homes and base of support lie not within the newly formed South Sudan but in the northern parts of the country still ruled by Khartoum. Following South Sudan's declaration of independence, the increasingly militant Khartoum regime has felt obliged to respond with force to what threatens to become a "new South," a source of resistance to the regime's 22-year stranglehold on national wealth and power. Focusing first on the nearby states of Abyei and South Kordofan, Khartoum has now turned its destructive attention to the rebel strongholds in Blue Nile. In the absence of increased international pressure on the regime, a bloody and protracted military confrontation appears imminent.

MOST PEOPLE IN Sudan's southern states of Abyei, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile feel that they were short-changed by the North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, but they expected, at least, "popular consultations"---discussions promised by the CPA through which the people of these war-torn areas would negotiate their relationship with the central government. Instead, Khartoum's first act---even before Southern secession---was to rig the election of Ahmed Haroun as governor of South Kordofan (Haroun is under indictment for 42 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur). Then, on June 5, the regime launched a military campaign against both political and military elements of the SPLA/M-N in South Kordofan, an operation overseen by Haroun and the state military and intelligence leadership. Unspeakable atrocity crimes marked the military and security effort, which continues to this day in the form of a relentless bombing of the African peoples of the Nuba Mountains, a tribal group known collectively as the Nuba. Without humanitarian access, which Khartoum continues to deny, the threat to human life is enormous. Valerie Amos, the head of UN humanitarian operations, declared on August 30 that:

"[M]ore than 200,000 people affected by the fighting in South Kordofan faced 'potentially catastrophic levels of malnutrition and mortality' because of Khartoum denying access to aid agencies. Also this week, two leading human rights groups said that deadly air raids on civilians in rebel-held areas of the Nuba Mountains may amount to war crimes."

Like the military seizure of Abyei (May 20) and the assault on the Nuba and SPLA/M-N in South Kordofan (June 5), the current campaign in Blue Nile was well prepared for, with troops and armor poised to move quickly and decisively. The regime's regular and militia forces moved preemptively, launching an attack on September 1 by bombing the home of the elected governor of Blue Nile, Malik Agar; Malik is also the political head of the SPLA/M-N. And as in South Kordofan, human displacement in Blue Nile has quickly become massive and suffering by civilians acute. More than 50,000 have been displaced since the beginning of Khartoum's campaign on September 1, and 25,000 have fled to Ethiopia. Khartoum is denying all humanitarian access, both to prevent foreign observers and as a savage weapon of war....

In addition, although military violence will likely capture whatever news attention the crises in Abyei, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile receive, the real story is in the dying that will come this fall. Normally, people in these regions would be looking forward to an October first harvest with the end of the rains. But this year vast tracts of land were too dangerous to cultivate in the Nuba Mountains, and starvation will begin soon without humanitarian access. In Blue Nile the UN's World Food Program is desperate to get food supplies in to

hundreds of thousands of people either displaced or food insecure. Khartoum's denial has been adamant. Human mortality will soon skyrocket.

WHAT HAS PROMPTED such brutal actions by Khartoum? What is the thinking within the regime? Here it's important to see, in the run-up to South Sudan's secession, that the army has become increasingly assertive, and the civilian cabal that heads the NIF/NCP more yielding. President Omar Al Bashir accommodates the army out of necessity, since it is the one constituency he can't afford to lose. But there are clear signs of discord within the cabal, as well as evidence of a creeping military coup. Julie Flint, an especially well-informed observer of Sudan, cites a source in Khartoum who makes clear that the "hour of the soldiers" has arrived. Her account is harrowing:

"[A] well-informed source close to the National Congress Party reports that Sudan's two most powerful generals went to [Sudanese President Omar Al] Bashir on May 5, five days after 11 soldiers were killed in an SPLA ambush in Abyei, on South Kordofan's southwestern border, and demanded powers to act as they sought fit, without reference to the political leadership."

"They got it," the source says. "It is the hour of the soldiers---a vengeful, bitter attitude of defending one's interests no matter what; a punitive and emotional approach that goes beyond calculation of self-interest..."

In addition, Khartoum has been emboldened in these ruthless military campaigns by the lack of any effective response from the UN, the African Union, or international actors of consequence, including the United States and the EU. There have been no meaningful responses to authoritative reports of large-scale extrajudicial executions, to satellite photography of mass gravesites, or to eyewitness accounts (many from UN human rights investigators in June) of house-to-house searches and roadblocks set up to kill or capture Nuba. Indiscriminate aerial bombardment of civilians---including a growing use of inherently inaccurate night attacks---has been repeatedly and authoritatively chronicled, and photographed, by news organizations and relief workers who have chosen to remain despite the dangers. Estimates of the number of displaced range as high as 500,000; some 8,000 people have now fled to a remote region of South Sudan, and according to the most recent UN figures, approximately 500 new refugees are now arriving daily....

Most of this goes unacknowledged by President Obama's special envoy for Sudan, Princeton Lyman. Instead, Lyman indulges in a facile moral equivocation between Khartoum and its adversaries, including the SPLA/M-N, and declares there is nothing the Obama administration is prepared to do beyond facilitating talks and "promot[ing] negotiations." Lyman has consistently been skeptical about the scale of atrocities committed by Khartoum's regular and militia forces, about the existence of mass gravesites, and about the deliberation with which the regime attacked first Abyei (after months of conspicuous preparation) and then South Kordofan. He is again far behind the curve on Blue Nile.

Lyman's moral and diplomatic agnosticism has two effects: It convinces the men in Khartoum that they will continue to suffer no consequences for their broadening military actions and continuing denial of relief to desperate civilians---and it convinces the SPLA/M-N that they are on their own, and that their only hope lies in military victory and regime change. A coalition involving rebel groups from Darfur, the SPLA/M-N, and forces in the restive eastern provinces seems increasingly likely; this would create a military front-line running from eastern Chad to the Ethiopian border and up to Sudan's border with Eritrea. The potential for spillover violence is extremely high...

The assault on Kurmuk is just beginning; it can be halted only if Khartoum quickly comes to understand that there will be significant consequences---from the U.S., from the EU, and from regional actors such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Given the tenor of Lyman's recent comments, there is little reason to believe Khartoum has any fears on this score; Kurmuk could be a bloodbath.

Eric Reeves is a professor at Smith College and author of [A Long Day's Dying: Critical Moments in the Darfur Genocide](#).

Full text of the article: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Blue-Nile-s-Kurmuk-could-be-a,40271>

*Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: The new country of South Sudan is not involved in the fighting that is described above. The non-Muslim Sudanese who were unfortunate enough to live north of the negotiated border between North and South Sudan are being slaughtered by the Muslim ruler of North Sudan, Omar Bashir, an indicted war criminal.*

*Usurping President Obama recently authorized the use of American military force to help oust Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. He declared that it was America's "responsibility to protect" the civilians who were being attacked by Gaddafi. In the case of Libya, our military force is being used to replace a Muslim dictator with a radical Muslim Brotherhood organization.*

*So why hasn't Obama come to the aid of civilians in Sudan? Omar Bashir is responsible for the death of about two million South Sudanese and Darfurians over the last twenty years. Now he is about to add to this genocide with additional tens-of-thousands from Nuba, Blue Nile, and Abyei. Bashir makes Gaddafi look benevolent by comparison.*

*Apparently, Obama does not feel like it is his "responsibility to protect" non-Muslim civilians being killed by Muslims (which is sanctioned by the Koran). This is another indication that Americans should have been asking a few more questions about his upbringing and loyalties before voting him into office.*

*Please pray for those in the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, and Abyei regions as they await the assault of a massive military force that takes no prisoners, but kills all – men, women, and children.*