

Catherine Ashton
High Representative of the Union
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice President of the European Commission

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

Our ref: B1219

Brussels, 12 June 2012

Dear Baroness Ashton,

EU MUST HELP PREVENT THE CONFLICT IN KORDOFAN FROM FURTHER DETERIORATION

A year after the start of the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan's People's Liberation Army North (SPLA-N) in Southern Kordofan, I wish to draw your attention to a new Amnesty International report *We can run away from bombs, but not from hunger: Sudan's refugees in South Sudan* (available [here](#)). It documents widespread human rights violations faced by civilians from Sudan's Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states owing to the continuing conflict there, and the human rights abuses and humanitarian challenges which confront them in the refugee camps to which they are fleeing.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians in Sudan have been displaced internally and as refugees into neighboring countries since June and September 2011 when conflict broke out in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. This largely results from continuing indiscriminate aerial bombardment by the SAF, a major characteristic of the conflict despite its prohibition under international humanitarian law, and food shortages compounded by the Sudanese authorities' denial of impartial humanitarian assistance to the conflict-affected areas. The Sudanese authorities have also arrested scores of known and perceived SPLM-N supporters, many of whom remain detained *incommunicado* without charge or access to a lawyer or their families.

Owing to the volatile border between the two countries, and the lack of basic infrastructure in refugee camps in South Sudan, civilians who flee there from Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to face humanitarian challenges and remain at risk of human rights abuses. They suffer severe water shortages and insufficient food, lack of access to education, inadequate protection from sexual and gender-based violence, and the presence of armed elements in the camps, further compromising their safety.

We urge the EU, in accordance with its Guidelines on International Humanitarian Law, to continue its calls on all parties to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law. We recommend that the EU:

- Demands an immediate end to indiscriminate aerial bombing and other violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by the Government of Sudan in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile
- Demands that the Government of Sudan allow humanitarian organisations and independent human rights monitors immediate and unhindered access to both states
- Establishes an independent enquiry into alleged violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile
- Supports an expansion of the UN arms embargo on Darfur to cover the whole of Sudan
- Supports negotiation of an effective Arms Trade Treaty with strong human rights rules at its heart

I look forward to your response and stand ready to provide any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nicolas J Beger
Director

Cc:

Nicholas James Westcott, EEAS Managing Director for Africa

Rolf Timans, EEAS Acting Director for Human Rights and Democracy

Koen Vervaeke, EEAS Director for Horn of Africa, East Africa and Indian Ocean

Claudia Wiedey-Nippold, EEAS Head of division for Horn of Africa, East Africa and Indian Ocean

Tomas Ulicny, Head of the EU Delegation to Sudan

Fiona Lunny, Chairperson of the Council Working Group on Africa