



“Living under aerial bombardments”

**Report of an investigation in the Province of Equatoria,
Southern Sudan**



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Foreword

“Médecins Sans Frontières” has been with the populations of The Sudan since 1979. From east to west, from north to south, the volunteers of the association have constantly tried their utmost best to bring medical assistance and relief to the Sudanese people and to advocate for their plight, without discrimination, in times of famine, outbreaks and war.

For the past two years, the Swiss section of the MSF movement has been renovating, re-equipping and re-launching medical and surgical activities in the civilian hospital of Kaju-Kaji (Province of Equatoria).

Since the beginning of the year 1999 until this very moment, we have been experiencing and witnessing direct aerial bombings of the hospital, while full of patients, and of the living compound of our medical team (*10 bombings in 1999, a total of 66 bombs dropped, with 13 hitting the hospital premises*). Facing the sharp increase of aerial bombardments in this region during 1999, frequently aimed at civilian structures such as hospitals, in November 1999, we requested an investigation of these events and their consequences for the civilian population in the area.

The elements of this investigation, included in the report herewith, tend to demonstrate that the strategy used by the Sudanese Air Force in this region, is deliberately aimed at targeting civilian structures, causing indiscriminate deaths and injuries, and contributes to a climate of terror among the civilian population. Furthermore, evidence has been found and serious allegations have been made that weapons of internationally prohibited nature are regularly employed against the civilian population such as cluster bombs and bombs with “chemical contents”.

We sincerely hope that this report will contribute to the awareness of all parties involved or concerned with the conflict in The Sudan, and to renewed efforts for the protection of the people of The Sudan, their rights and their dignity. We hope as well, that the Sudanese Government brings to an end the systematic bombing of civilian populations and infrastructures by its Air Force.

20th of February 2000

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1. The Sudan Violates International Humanitarian Law

- Bombings that are deliberately aimed at the civilian population and civilian targets, in particular against sanitary structures and injured and sick people, and the use of weapons containing chemical products and cluster weapons are forbidden by the Humanitarian Law.
- These practices constitute war crimes.
- The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocols of 1977 limit the war methods and establish rules of protection in favor of the non-combatants:
 - The belligerents need to make a distinction between the combatants and the non-combatants, between the military targets and the civilian targets.
 - The use of force needs to be in proportion to the threat and needs to be justified by a real military necessity.
 - Weapons that strike without distinction and that cause unnecessary damages are forbidden.
 - The civilian population, the injured and the sick, the humanitarian personnel and the sanitary structures benefit from a reinforced protection. They need to be respected and should not be attacked.
 - War methods and means of combat that damage the natural environment are forbidden.
- The convention of 13 January 1993, on the interdiction of the development, fabrication, storage and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction, forbids the use of chemical weapons.

The Sudan signed the first Geneva Convention in 1957. The country is also supposed to respect the fundamental rules of the International Humanitarian Law. The customary character of these dispositions make them obligatory to all belligerents.

The Sudan is a State Party to the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention since May 24th 1999.

2. Introduction

In 1999, the aerial bombings by the Sudanese Government on the Province of Equatoria (Southern Sudan)¹ intensified considerably, especially in the counties of Kajo Keji, Yei, Maridi and Kapoeta. The MSF teams that have been working in the region since 1997, have, several times, been victims and witnesses of these bombings that are only aimed at the civilian population and civilian targets. Hospitals and schools in particular, are deliberately chosen as targets.

MSF is particularly worried about the use or alleged use of prohibited weapons (such as cluster bombs and chemical bombs) that have indiscriminate effect. The allegations regarding the use of chemical bombs started on 23 July 1999, when the villages of Lainya and Loka (Yei County) were bombed with chemical products. In a reaction to this event, a group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had taken samples on the 30th of July, and on the 7th of August the United Nations (UN) did the same. Although the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is competent and empowered to carry out such an “investigation of alleged use”, it needs an official request made by another State Party. To date, we deplore that OPCW has not received any official request from any State Party to investigate, and that since the U.N. samples taking, no public statement has been made concerning these samples nor the results of the laboratory tests.

MSF reminds that bombings aimed at the civilian populations and civilian targets, and the use of chemical weapons and cluster bombs are strictly forbidden by the International Humanitarian Law. These practices can be qualified as war crimes.

3. Objectives and methods of this report

On several occasions in 1999, the MSF teams that worked in the Province of Equatoria, in Southern Sudan, were victims and witnesses of aerial bombings on the civilian population and civilian targets carried out by the Government of Sudan. In January 1999, after the bombing of Kajo Keji hospital in which MSF works, and being confronted with an increase of these bombings, MSF decided to evaluate the impact of the bombings on the civilian population and on the security of its teams. In order to carry out this evaluation, MSF has:

- documented several of these bombings: date, location, target, number and types of bombs used, number of victims; and,
- gathered the testimonies² of witnesses and victims of these bombings among the civilian population, the MSF teams and other humanitarian organizations that work in the region.

¹ Maps located in appendix 5

² Complete testimonies in appendix 4 (for security reasons, names of people and organizations have been voluntarily removed)

This evaluation has been carried out in four different counties in the Province of Equatoria, which have particularly suffered from the bombings: Kajo Keji, Yei, Maridi and Kaopeta. It clearly shows:

- I. that the bombings are aimed at the civilian population and civilian targets, in particular hospitals and schools;
- II. the use or alleged use of prohibited weapons with indiscriminate effects: cluster bombs and weapons containing chemical products; and
- III. a policy of terror which provokes new displacements of the population and increases the precariousness of the civilian population.

4. Report

4.1. Bombings aimed at the civilian population and civilian targets, in particular hospitals and schools

In 1999, the Government of Sudan multiplied its aerial bombings over the Province of Equatoria (Southern Sudan), in the counties of Kajo Keji, Yei, Maridi and Kaopeta. According to a non-exhaustive list of bombings, more than sixty bombings³ took place between January 1999 and January 2000 in town and villages such as Narus, Chukudum, Labone, Kajo Keji, Maridi, Yei, Ikotos, Loka, Lainya, Parajok, Tali Post and Morobo. During the same period, a total of almost 400 bombs had been launched on the civilian population and civilian targets, killing at least 22 persons and wounding 51.

A member of the Yei hospital reports :

“In 1999, the Antonov⁴ killed many people in the town of Yei and in other small villages in the county. The Antonov is a real danger for the population in town. The hospitals, schools and churches are frequent targets.”

A MSF volunteer says :

“On my arrival in Kajo Keji in February 1999”, “I was welcomed by the Antonov, which occasionally bombs this area. One day the plane flew over the hospital and all the patients ran for shelter in the hospital compound. At the end of February, the plane dropped five bombs in town and two near the hospital, injuring one girl who suffered deep cut wounds on her right heel. The frequent visits of this plane continued on an almost weekly basis, dropping bombs at least once a week and causing several casualties. The most serious bombing, which shocked me, occurred around June 1999 and killed one person in town. It blew off the victim’s brain, which caused instantaneous death. The vehicle of a humanitarian organization was severely damaged. The windshield was broken and there were holes everywhere. One of our national staff members, almost lost his life as the bomb landed at about five meters from where he took refuge.”

³ Non Exhaustive list of bombardments in appendix 1

⁴ The planes “Antonov” are used as bomb carriers

A priest from Maridi testifies:

“In March this year (1999), we attended a seminar. The plane arrived, flew over our heads for over half an hour and then dropped its bombs. One child was killed. The Antonov never bombs any military targets such as the front line. They always aim at the civilian population.”

The hospitals of Kajo Keji, Yei and Maridi were bombed on numerous occasions in 1999, which threatened the safety of the patients and the medical teams, caused panic among the injured and the ill, and complicated the medical care.

“It is very sad to see patients, sometime just out of surgery, on the run with their IV (intravenous drip) in their hands, looking for shelter”, says a representative of a humanitarian organization in Kajo Keji.

“I have noticed that during periods of heavy bombings people are terrorized” confesses a medical staff member of the Yei hospital. *“They may be coming to the hospital for treatment, but they do not have time to listen to the health practitioners. They want some medications and they run away.”*

In these three hospitals, the attendance of patients has been reduced to 25% and sometimes even 40%. The pre-birth clinics, which were regularly visited by pregnant women, and the maternity hospitals are basically empty. As a result of the insecurity, women prefer giving birth at home, and the ill arrive too late sometimes.

A MSF member who works in the Kajo Keji hospital explains :

“Most of the people do not turn up for medical services, or they arrive very late in the hospital, when the sickness is badly advanced “ During the months of March-April, I have noticed a significant drop in the attendance at OPD level as well as in the IPD department. There is one incident that I remember; it was in April, at around 10 AM. I was attending a child patient who was under transfusion. I heard the sound of the plane but I could not leave the children alone and I just hoped for the best. The plane came and dropped a bomb that fell on the hospital compound. I was terribly scared but fortunately survived. As a reaction, the mother of the child patient decided to run away with the certitude that the child will die because of the severe sickness.”

The hospital of Kajo Keji in which MSF works has become a particularly privileged target of the Sudanese Government. The year 1999 started and ended with a bombing of the hospital. On 13 January 1999, five bombs were dropped on the hospital. Three of them destroyed the facilities used for the vaccination campaigns and seriously damaged the operation room and the consultation units. Fortunately, no casualties were reported. At the end of December 1999, another five bombs were dropped on the hospital. Three of them exploded, but there were no victims nor any material damage. In both cases, the hospital was clearly a target, as no bombs were dropped elsewhere. This situation gives all the more cause for concern, as half of the hospital beds are reserved for children.

A MSF member who works in the Kajo Keji hospital testifies on several of these bombings:

“I was in the operating room with the surgeon, attending a patient who had a shoulder injury. The patient was under anesthesia. The Antonov came, we heard the sound and we did not know what to do. We finally decided to remain and we just lied down on the floor. The plane flew over and a bomb was dropped and fell just behind the operating room. All the glasses of the windows got broken and fell inside the operation room, fortunately without injuring the patient or us. We then got up, took the patient to the ward and we went into a bunker, because the plane was still rotating over our heads. I would like to tell another episode in which I was involved and miraculously survived. It was in June, at the beginning of the month, at around 10 or 11 AM. I was on duty in the hospital. The plane came and dropped bombs in the town. I suddenly decided to leave the hospital and run home. As soon I reached my home, the plane was over the hospital area (I live near the hospital) and ready to drop the deadly bombs. I just had time to take my wife and children to a hole. I lied down on the ground behind a heap of sweet potatoes. The bomb just hit the ground at about two meters from where I was. The blast was so powerful that I was fully covered with soil. Of course, the sound of the explosion was so loud that I was unable to hear for more than a week. Even now I feel that I have not yet fully recovered from this experience. Sometimes I suffer from headaches, up to the point that I am unable to attend to my usual duties.”

The humanitarian organizations are not being spared by the bombings. Several of them have had to cut down on their staff, which seriously affected their activities. Others have decided to move away from the targeted cities, in spite of the fact that this implies additional expenses and the need to ask their backers for more money.

“Our compound was located in the center of town”, explains the representative of a humanitarian organization in Yei, “but in May this year several bombs struck the place and destroyed all our assets and equipment. After that day we have decided to move out of town and at the moment we are here, hopefully in a better and safer place.”

A member of another humanitarian organization in Yei tells:

“The most vicious thing is the night bombing. During one of these night raids, one bomb fell just inside our compound. I remember it was about midnight. The bomb hit a tree located at about 20 meters from the main house. The bomb exploded as it touched the tree, and we heard all the fragments flying away and falling on us through the zinc plates on the roof and the ceiling boards. Doors and windows were also violently opened by the blast. All this during one very dark and scary night. This is really terrible and dangerous, because most of the time we are unable to run out of the house in search of refuge and therefore we are obliged to remain inside the house, under the bed or just near the door.”

The representative of a humanitarian organization explains:

“During the year 1999, the town of Maridi has been the target of aerial bombings on several occasions. Therefore we have come to the conclusion that both the hospital and the living compound should be relocated elsewhere. This decision has been taken, but so far, due to some constraints, it has not been realized yet. This is just to say how stressful and inhuman life is under the threat of an aerial bombing. I remember the day that the operating room was once again renovated after it had been damaged by fragments of a bombing. One patient was operated in the afternoon and taken to the operating room. During the night the Antonov came and again the hospital was targeted and the operating room damaged. All these actions are very demoralizing and discouraging.”

In Yei, the hospital has also been a target of several bombings. A member of a humanitarian organization gives his testimony on one of these attacks:

“One night, during an aerial bombing on the town of Yei, people woke up as usual and started to run for refuge. As usual the hospital had been targeted. A mother, whose child was admitted in the children’s ward, took her child and ran out of the ward and jumped into a foxhole. The Antonov dropped several bombs. One of the bombs dropped in the hospital was a cluster bomb. One of these small bombs landed in the foxhole where the mother and the child had taken refuge. Fortunately the bomb did not explode, but instead landed on the woman’s leg and penetrated a few centimeters into her flesh. This terrorized everybody, including the medical staff.”

Schools are also chosen as targets by the Sudanese Government, spreading panic among students, teachers and parents. Some schools had to shut down while others have seen their number of students drop because of the insecurity.

In Kajo Keji County which counts five primary schools, the school of Kajo Keji closed its doors at the beginning of the year 1999, due to the aerial bombings. One bomb had dropped right next to the school. The teachers, the parents and the students were terrorized by the attacks of the Antonov bombers. In Kajo Keji, pupils from a school also testified:

“When the military plane comes, all classes stop and we run out of the classroom and take refuge in the trenches dug behind the school. Up to now, no bombs have been dropped around the school. The school in town was closed because the teachers, the children and the parents were too scared about the continuous passing of the Antonov. When the Antonov comes, we are very scared and when we are in the trench we are very silent and lie down. We wonder when the plane will leave and we’ll be able to return to classroom. After the plane has gone, we return to class but we feel very much disturbed and unable to follow the lessons. At the same time, the teacher is also scared and unable to teach properly. When we are in the trench, we are scared for ourselves, but also for our parents who are working and could be hurt or killed by the bomb.”

In Narus (Kapoeta County), the primary school has been the target of several bombings in 1999 and the number of students dropped, as a teacher explains:

“We the teachers and the parents are very proud of the quality of the teaching at this school. Unfortunately, all is not so easy and the main problem is due to the aerial bombings. This year we have 350 registered students. 250 of them are here permanently, the rest are residents of the town of Narus. Last year we had 570 registered students. The significant drop is mainly due to the insecurity brought by the Antonov. It has to be said that the school has been the target of several bombings and one time it has been damaged by the fragments of two bombs. These indiscriminate bombings are affecting everybody.... The threat of the bombings has a double negative effect on the education of the children. Because of insecurity they go away; the most fortunate of them find other schools, others just remain in the streets.”

A school boy from Narus talks about the difficulties to study:

“When we are in our classes, we are trying to learn. The plane comes and our concentration is gone. If we feel that the plane is going to drop bombs, then we all rush out of the school and look for the trenches. It is difficult for us to keep up with our studies. The Sister has given us some kerosene lamps so we can study during the night. This helps only partially, because the Antonov also comes to bombard during the night... The time of exams is near and we are scared that the Antonov will soon start again and disturb us like it happened last year.”

Another student talks about one of the bombings on the school and his fear of planes:

“The bombings started in 1997, but then it was not so bad as these days. This year, the Antonov came and released one bomb, which fell on our school. One of our colleagues was in the toilet but she managed to escape and she is alive and here with us. The bomb hit the toilet and destroyed it down to its foundations. I am one of the girls who are the most afraid of planes. Even the relief planes that fly-over regularly, scare me. We are here struggling, please tell the Khartoum government to stop bombarding our place so we will be able to develop and construct our country. We are also appealing to donors and the UN to supply us with some material so we can dig and built safer bunkers.”

The young girl who escaped this bombing of the school of Narus testifies :

“I was unwell for a few days suffering from acute diarrhea. For this reason I was often in the toilets located at the end of the compound just behind the school. I was in the toilet when I heard the sound of a plane. I immediately realized that the plane was the Antonov. I got up, ran quickly out of the toilet and started running away from that place. I lied on the ground just in time to hear the explosion of the bomb and the fragments flying all over. After a few seconds I looked towards the place where the toilet was located, but I could not see the construction. The toilet was replaced by a big hole, which is still visible.”

4.2. The use or alleged use of prohibited weapons with indiscriminate effects: cluster bombs and weapons containing chemical products

The increase of the bombings on the civilian population and civilian targets in 1999, was accompanied by the use of cluster bombs and weapons containing chemical products. On 23 July 1999, the towns of Lainya and Loka (Yei County) were bombed with chemical products. At the time of this bombing, the usual subsequent results (i.e. shrapnel, destruction to the immediate environment, impact, etc.) did not take place. Alternatively, the aftermath of this bombing resulted in a nauseating, thick cloud of smoke, and later symptoms such as children and adults vomiting blood and pregnant women having miscarriages were reported. These symptoms of the victims leave no doubt as to the nature of the weapons used. Two field staff of the World Food Program (WFP) who went back to Lainya, three days after the bombing, had to be evacuated on the 27th of July. They were suffering of nausea, vomiting, eye and skin burns, loss of balance and headaches⁵.

After this incident, the WFP interrupted its operations in the area, and most of the humanitarian organizations that are members of the Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) had to suspend their activities after the UN had declared the area to be dangerous for its personnel.

Shortly after these bombings, two investigations were carried out, one on the 30th of July, by a group of NGOs, and the second one, on the 7th of August, by the UN. In both cases, samples were taken. Up to now, no results of any kind have been revealed publicly, leaving the population and the humanitarian workers in a daily fearful situation. The OPCW was aware of these bombardments in Southern Sudan with the alleged use of chemical weapons. As the OPCW director specified in a letter⁶ dated December 1999, this organization has the expertise and is empowered to carry out an “investigation of alleged use of chemical weapon” on the territory of a State Party, but it needs an official request made by another State Party to do so. Although the Sudanese authorities denied having violated its obligations under the OCPW convention⁷, we regret that no State Member requested such an investigation.

The inquiry carried out by the group of NGOs, however, reached a conclusion on the chemical nature of the bombs used, and revealed the worrying consequences of these bombings: children and adults vomiting blood, pregnant women having miscarriages and a great number of dead birds and small animals.

A member of a humanitarian organization who went back to these places shortly after the bombings tells:

“We have been the first to reach the area and what we found was very sad. One person got sick and died, one nurse was admitted in the hospital with symptoms of poisoning. Till today, the situation is bad, nobody really bothers to tell us, to tell the population, what is happening. For example, soon after this incident the UN/OLS

⁵ “two WFP staff experienced nausea, vomiting, burning eyes and skin, disorientation and headaches after passing through Lainya, Western Equatoria and Kaya (Uganda) on 27 July. The initial symptoms disappeared and were later replaced by ‘flu-like symptoms’ (...). Tests are being carried out to determine the cause of the symptoms” *OLS Newsletter, August 1999*

⁶ see appendix 3

⁷ The Sudan is a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention since May 24th 1999

decided to put the area under security level 4 and instructed all UN personnel not to go or transit around the zone. Actually, the instructions were so restrictive that for one entire month all relief and rehabilitation activities were halted. In fact the UN security informed us that the road from Kaya to Yei was closed (to UN personnel and NGOs working under the umbrella of OLS), and nobody was supposed to leave Yei to go to Lainya. Our organization being a member of the OLS consortium has made us stay in our compound for over a month. Suddenly on the 3rd of September, a delegation from Lokichoggio came and visited Lainya and Kaya and declared the area safe and therefore activities could start again. The way that this happened is at least amazing. Today we are still asking ourselves what is going on; really nobody has bothered to give us some reassurance or explanation of the real nature of these gas bombs.”

A mid-wife who works in the bombed areas and who has been a victim herself, testifies:

“I was here when the chemical bomb was dropped. It was a strange bomb, very different from the one we have been used to receive on our land. One of them just fell near a tukul⁸, and developed a dense smoke, but the construction remained intact. It was clear that the bomb was different and may be in plastic case. After this explosion, people started developing a strange sickness, which were unusual to the normal bombs. Coughing, burning eyes, difficulties to breath, miscarriages and death. I was admitted to the hospital for almost a month with severe coughing and vomiting blood. It was the rainy season. Just after the bombing the rain came, it filled the hole produced by the impact and suddenly the color of the water turned reddish. The goats and other domestic animals including some birds which drunk that water died on the spot. Some people from different organizations came here a few days after this incident, and collected soil samples, water samples, blood from sick patients, sputum and other samples to be analyzed somewhere. It is unfortunate that till today we did not receive any information from these people. It is clear that for us here on the ground the situation is very frightening.”

On the same day as the bombings in Yei County, 23 July 1999, nine bombs (suspected to be chemical) were dropped on the banks of a river in Maridi town (Maridi County), which makes us fear the worst for the population and the environment. A member of a humanitarian organization who works in Maridi says:

“On the 23rd of July, the Antonov came and dropped 9 bombs just near the riverbank. It is funny, but none of the bombs went off. They all landed on a very swampy area and this is why they did not explode. We suspect that these bombs are chemical as they have been dropped on the same day as the Lainya attack. As we said, it was our intention to move from here. But of course this decision is not simple, particularly with regard for our local staff. If we go, this will demoralize them terribly and the program will be seriously affected.”

In addition to the alleged use of chemical weapons, the Sudanese Government has also used cluster bombs, which are particularly dangerous for the civilian population.

⁸ Local house

As a resident of Maridi explains : *“Even when the bombs are dropped far away, the fragments can reach our home and cause fire and destruction.”* A member of MSF who works in Kajo Keji confirms the statement of this person: *“Most of the time, the bombs were of a fragmented type which is more dangerous, as the fragments can fly about 2 kilometers away and cause serious injuries if they hit you.”*

Cluster bombs sometimes spread mines that can strike the population long after the bombings, as this testimony of a humanitarian worker shows, who had seen two children blown up in Nimule (Kajo Keji County):

“At around March/April this year, I was in Nimule for a program review and I have witnessed, astonished and powerless, the death of two young girls, who were daughters of a friend of mine. Their death occurred after the explosion of a cluster bomb. During an aerial bombing last year, a cluster bomb was dropped on the town of Nimule. Several small bombs, which became a sort of antipersonnel mine, were found and disposed of. Unfortunately, one of these bombs remained hidden under the grass and exploded when fire was set for clearing the land. The two young girls were playing in the vicinity of the fire when the bomb blasted and killed both of them instantaneously.”

The hospitals and facilities of the humanitarian organizations have also been targets of these bombings with cluster bombs. *“Since the beginning of this year, 89 bombs have been dropped in Mere (town) and Mundari (hospital) some of which were cluster bombs, and till now we do not know how many of them remain unexploded.”*

On 20 June 1999, two bombs were dropped on the compound of the Kajo Keji hospital, spreading over one hundred mines that were neutralized afterwards. Later on in July, MSF became the target of new bombings:

“On a Sunday afternoon, several cluster bombs were shelled in the MSF compound and in the children’s playground. Luckily enough these cluster bombs never exploded. Some experts from a specialized organization came later on to collect and destroyed them. Thank God these ones have not caused any harm to the population so far.”

The use of these non conventional weapons is a cause for major concern for the population and the humanitarian organizations that work in the Province of Equatoria. In Kajo Keji, a man shares his concern:

“Since the beginning of this year, we have been witnessing an intensification of the aerial bombings. This in terms of quantities of bombs dropped but also in terms of the quality of the bombs. In fact the type of bombs that were thrown on us went from conventional ones to the cluster bombs, and now to chemical bombs. Particularly the last ones are threatening our lives constantly. People have grown quite accustomed to the usual bombs in the past few months. The people found a mechanism of survival, digging fox holes and bunkers near their houses and their places of work. The holes and the bunkers were protecting them. Now, the issue of this chemical bomb has frightened everybody in a very powerless way: what can we do against gas?”

A religious leader from Lainya (Yei County), shares the same feeling of helplessness towards the use of chemical bombs: *“Despite this threat we have managed to cope with these events. In fact, trenches have been dug were we can take refuge. The recent chemical bombs have left all of us with the terror of what will happen to us and to our children.”*

4.3. A policy of terror that provokes new displacements of the population and that increases precariousness of the civilian population

The systematic bombings against the civilian population and civilian targets, and the use or alleged use of prohibited weapons such as cluster bombs or bombs containing chemical products, show the intention of the government to establish a policy of terror in the Province of Equatoria. This Southern Sudanese province started to regain its population in 1997, when refugees returned from the neighboring countries and the internally displaced people went back to their places of origin. The 1999 bombings have not only put a stop to these repopulating movements, but they have also provoked new displacements of people. There are still 500.000 internally displaced people in the Province of Equatoria, and 300.000 Sudanese refugees in the neighboring countries. A humanitarian representative in Kajo Keji says :

“Most of the people who returned last year (1998), are now no longer around. The town of Kajo Keji is inhabited at the moment by no more than 20 families in comparison to more than 200 families counted in 1998. To explain the extent of the disrupting effects of the aerial bombings on the civilian population we can look at the population movements in the camps. During the months of May and June, the displaced camps of Bomurye and Kirwa witnessed an increase in the number of registered persons by about 10% compared to the preceding months.”

A member of a humanitarian organization explains :

“After the intensification of the bombings early this year (1999), people have disappeared, I do not know where they have gone but they are no longer here. During the last two months there have been no bombings but still no sign of a return of people to the town. It will take time for all of them to regain some confidence and decide to return. What the Khartoum government is achieving with this fairly cheap strategy, is enormous. The panic, the terror and the psychological effects on the entire population are causing more damage than any ground attack.”

Still in Kajo Keji, a representative of a humanitarian organization confirms the departure of people from the town and its surroundings:

“Our activities here in Kajo Keji are rehabilitation and development. One of the main objectives is food security and health. Last year, we have been able to organize women of this area and implement a small income-generating program. Most of the women who have been participating very enthusiastically in organizing development activities since the beginning of this year 1999, are no longer living here. They have decided to return to the rural area and some of them have returned to Uganda.”

In Lainya and Loka (Yei County), a mid-wife also testifies about these displacements of people after the attacks with weapons containing chemical products: *“These two small towns*

were very populated a few months ago. Now, as you can see, very few people have remained here; mainly the people who work with the organizations operating in this area.” In addition to these displacements of people, the insecurity and the destruction of the infrastructure caused by the aerial bombardments, have put a stop to the development of Equatoria Province, and have made the population more dependent of international aid.

The agriculture has also been seriously affected. “Our officer responsible for the agricultural program has decided to leave the program”, explains a representative of a humanitarian organization based in Kajo Keji. “Farmers who have started producing surplus grains have abandoned this idea due to the market’s inability to absorb the products.”

A farmer from Kajo Keji says:

“The various farming activities are regularly affected. For example, the land clearing this year has been delayed. The land clearing is the first activity that is performed each planting season. Normally the land clearing is done by burning the grass. Because of the smoke produced by the burning grass we were scared of signaling our position to the Antonov bomber and therefore we have been able to set fire to the bush only when the weather was cloudy. The threat of bombings has therefore caused delays on clearing, planting, weeding and harvesting.”

A religious leader from Lainya explains :

“These bombings are affecting the rural community as well as the town population. In fact, the rural population is now carrying the burden of the displaced people from the town. As a result, certain areas already have a shortage of food. Moreover, the rural population is suffering from the lack of basic services like clean drinking water, health and education. Despite this poverty, people prefer to live a miserable life than risk being killed by the fragments of the bombs or by the gas of these recent bombs.”

The current precariousness of the population gives even more cause for concern than in 1998, when estimated 250’000 people were victims of famine in Southern Sudan.

5. Conclusion

From the reports and testimonies that we have gathered, we conclude that the Sudan is in violation of International Humanitarian Law and the Geneva Convention. MSF abhors the constant terrorization of the civilian population of Southern Sudan and the constant destruction of civilian targets, including hospitals and schools. MSF is also horrified by the escalating use of aerial bombardment including the use or alleged use of prohibited weapons (such as cluster bombs and chemical bombs). This has resulted in the death and displacement of the civilian population of Southern Sudan, and is leading them to an uncertain and insecure future. This has also created a threatening environment of insecurity for relief efforts, which had to be brought to an abrupt halt in some cases. MSF is deeply concerned about the survival and the respect of the rights and dignity of the people of Southern Sudan, as well as the relief workers whose lives are threatened in their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population.

MSF believes that the information contained in this report confirms that the human rights of the civilian population in Southern Sudan are regularly and deliberately violated and this must be stopped immediately.

Aerial Bombardment of Civilian Population in the Equatoria Region

Non exhaustive list of bombings from January 1999 to January 2000

Date	Time	Location	No of bombs	comments	
1	09.01.99	11:00 AM	Narus	20	Two Antonov dropped bombs, 2 killed and 12 wounded
2	09.01.99	12:00	Chukudum	5	No casualty
3	11.01.99	11:10 AM	Labone	2	No casualty
4	13.01.99	1:00 PM	Kajo Keji	7	4 bombs hit directly the hospital, one bomb in the bush. No casualty but extensive damages at EPI centre and surgical theatre
5	24.01.99	10:30 AM	Yei	10	3 people killed no damages to infrastructure
6	25.01.99	12:45 PM	Yei	5	No casualty
7	20.02.99	xxxx	Ikotos	5	No casualty
8	23/0299	11:30 AM	Yei	24	1person killed; SMC compound burned
9	23.02.99	11:10 PM	Maridi	6	1 person was killed and 1 wounded
10	24.02.99	12:50 AM	Yei	12	No casualty
11	27.02.99	xxxx	Maridi	xxxx	No casualty
12	03.03.99	6:35 AM	Yei	24	No casualty, serious damages to the hospital infrastructure
13	03.03.99	9:45 AM	Maridi	9	3 people were killed and 9 injured
14	16.03.99	11:00 AM	Kajo Keji	4	3 bombs were dropped near the hospital; one person injured but no damages
15	21.03.99	11:30 AM	Kajo Keji	7	4 bombs were dropped in the town, 3 near the airstrip No casualty
16	04.04.99	xxxx	Narus	xxxx	2 people wounded
17	29.04.99	11:30 AM	Yei	4	No casualty and no damages
18	03.05.99	11:30 AM	Yei	14	2 persons killed, 7 Wounded; OSIL compound destroyed. A cattle camp was hit as well and 3 cows died
19	05.05.99	9:30 AM	Maridi	6	No casualty on human beings, seeveral domestic animals killed
20	08.05.99	4:30 PM	Loka	4	4 people killed and 2 wounded
21	08.05.99	4:30 PM	Lainya	3	1 person wounded
22	20.05.99	11:30 AM	Kajo Keji	10	No casualty
23	20.05.99	12:00	Yei	4	4 people were killed; f5 houses destroyed
24	22.05.99	10:30 AM	Chukudum	5	1 children killed and 3 woman wounded
25	24.05.99	11:00 AM	Kajo Keji	9	4 bombs were dropped around the hospital compound; 1 person killed, 3 wounded. Serious damages to one NGOs car
26	24.05.99	11:45 AM	Yei	8	Several houses destroyed; No casualty
27	24.05.99	11:50 AM	Loka	2	No cacualties
28	30.05.99	11:00 AM	Kajo Keji	2	No casualty, no damages
29	30.05.99	12:20	Yei	5	3 people wounded; several houses destroyed
30	31.05.99	xxxx	Narus	xxxx	No casualty

31	31.05.99	10:10 AM	Chukudum	3	No casualty
32	01.06.99	13:15 PM	Chukudum	4	No casualty
33	01.06.99	13:30 PM	Narus	xxxx	On car of a local organisation destroyed
34	03.06.99	xxxx	Ikotos	xxxx	No casualty
35	04.06.99	6:30 PM	Chukudum	4	No casualty
36	05.06.99	11:00 PM	Chukudum	12	No casualty
37	10.06.99	4:00 PM	Chukudum	12	No casualty
38	16.06.99	5:30 PM	Parajok	xxxx	No casualty reported
39	16.06.99	6:00 PM	Labone	2	2 people wounded
40	17.06.99	1:00 PM	Chukudum	14	No casualty
41	20.06.99	11:00 AM	Kajo Keji	8	No casualty. 2 cluster bombs dropped in hospital compound. More than 100 mines were collected.
42	20.06.99	11:30 AM	Yei	12	No casualty
43	20.06.99	11:40	Maridi	4	No casualty; The hospital construction damaged
44	27.06.99	xxxx	Yei	12	2 people wounded, the UN water compound was targetted
45	28.06.99	5:00 AM	Kajo Keji	8	No casualty and no injuries reported
46	05.07.99	xxxx	Yei	4	No casualty
47	06.07.99	12:50 PM	Nimule	5	No casualty
48	07.07.99	xxxx	Parajok	6	No casualty
49	13.07.99	xxxx	Ikotos	4	No casualty
50	13.07.99	xxxx	Parajok	7	No casualty
51	18.07.99	xxxx	Akot	6	No casualty
52	19.07.99	xxxx	Tali post	xxxx	3 people injured
53	21.07.99	10:00 AM	Lainya	10	No casualty
54	22.07.99	6:30 PM	Lainya	6	No casualty
55	23.07.99	7:10 PM	Loka	2	No casualty
56	23.07.99	xxxx	Lainya	8	No casualty, suspected chemical bombs, people experienced nausea, irritation to nose, eyes and skin
57	23.07.99	11:15 AM	Maridi	9	No casualty, most of the bombs did not exploded
58	23.07.99	xxxx	Kaya	xxxx	No casualty
59	24.07.99	xxxx	Morobo	4	No casualty
60	28.07.99	xxxx	Parajok	3	1 woman seriously injured
61	29.07.99	xxxx	Parajok	xxxx	No casualty
62	04.08.99	11:30 PM	Lainya	3	No casualty
63	06.12.99	9:30 AM	Kajo Keji	5	No casualty
64	28.12.99	xxxx	Kajo Keji	7	No casualty



Communiqué de presse urgent

SUD-SOUDAN

MSF condamne le bombardement de l'hôpital de Kajo Keiji

Kajo-Keiji/Genève, le 13 janvier 1999. L'organisation internationale Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) a condamné aujourd'hui le bombardement de l'hôpital civil de Kajo Keiji, où MSF travaille, dans la province de Western Equatoria, au Sud Soudan. A 12h30, heure locale, cinq bombes ont été lancées sur le périmètre hospitalier. Trois d'entre elles ont atteint l'hôpital détruisant les infrastructures utilisées pour les campagnes de vaccinations et endommageant sérieusement le bloc opératoire et le service des consultations. Il n'y a pas eu de victimes. L'hôpital civil était clairement visé, aucune bombe n'a été lancée ailleurs.

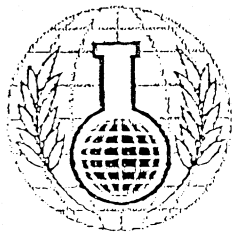
Depuis septembre 1997, MSF travaille à l'hôpital de Kajo Keiji qui dessert une population de 90'000 habitants. La moitié des 60 lits est réservée pour des enfants. Dans les dernières six semaines, le Gouvernement soudanais a systématiquement bombardé plusieurs hôpitaux dans les provinces d'Eastern et Western Equatoria. Les hôpitaux civils de Yei, Nimule, Labone et Chukudum ont ainsi été pris pour cible.

“Cette attaque constitue un acte déplorable en visant clairement des civils et des structures d'assistance médicale aux populations. MSF se demande s'il ne s'agit pas là d'une politique délibérée du Gouvernement soudanais de prendre pour cible des populations civiles et des hôpitaux”, déclare Ettore Larici, chef de mission MSF au Sud Soudan. *“Ce bombardement aura de lourdes conséquences sur la population. Beaucoup de réfugiés et de personnes déplacées étaient revenus à Kajo Keiji en priorité en raison de la présence de service médicaux”.*

Viser délibérément des hôpitaux civils constitue une violation des principes fondamentaux du droit humanitaire international. Le gouvernement du Soudan est tenu par ces principes de respecter la protection dont bénéficie les blessés, les malades ainsi que les unités médicales. MSF demande instamment aux parties au conflit de respecter le droit humanitaire international et de cesser de prendre pour cible des sites civils et médicaux.

MSF travaille au Soudan depuis 1985 en assistant les populations du nord et du sud du pays.

Pour plus d'informations, vous pouvez contacter Thierry Durand, directeur des opérations MSF, et Marc Joly, à Médecins Sans Frontières, Genève, au tél. 022/849.84.37, ainsi que Ettore Larici, Chef de Mission Sud Soudan au 00254/2/ 571701



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Office of the Director-General

ODG/27660/99

16 December 1999

Dear Mr. Orbinski,

I wish to refer your letter dated 30 November 1999 relating to the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Government of Sudan in July 1999 during the air bombardments of the towns of Lainya and Loka in Southern Sudan. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is aware of the allegations which were made through various press reports following the incident.

Sudan is a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and has, since 23 June 1999, been obliged, *inter alia*, not to threaten to use or actually to use chemical weapons. The OPCW has engaged in consultations on this issue with the representatives of Sudan, and has offered its services to help in clarifying the situation. The Sudanese authorities have informed us that Sudan did not violate its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and have indeed issued statements to this effect.

Although the OPCW is empowered, under the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to carry out an "investigation of alleged use" on the territory of a State Party, such a request needs to be made by another State Party, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article X, paragraphs 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the Convention. To date, the OPCW has not received any such request.

The OPCW has not, in any way, been involved in the initiatives undertaken by the two organisations mentioned in your letter. Under the circumstances, it would be appropriate for your organisation to communicate directly with the United Nations with regard to your request.

Yours sincerely,

José M. Bustani
Director-General

Dr James Orbinski
President
Médecins Sans Frontières International Council
B-1040 Brussels

*Complete testimonies⁹
of the victims
of the aerial bombings*

A MSF staff member working in the Kajo Keji hospital relates:

On my arrival in Kajo Keji (February 1999), I was welcomed by the Antonov, which occasionally bombs this area. The plane was flying over the hospital and all the patients ran for shelter in the compound. At the end of February the plane dropped five bombs in town and two near the hospital, injuring one girl who suffered deep cut wounds on her right heel. The frequent visits of this plane continued on an almost weekly basis, dropping bombs at least once a week and causing several casualties. The most serious bombing, which shocked me, occurred around June 1999 and killed one person in town. It blew off the victim's brain, which caused instantaneous death. The vehicle of a humanitarian organization was severely damaged. Windshield broken, and holes everywhere. One of our national staff member almost lost his life as the bomb landed at about five meters from where he took refuge near a heap of sweet potatoes.

These acts of human violations have been going on in this place since I came here in February, and poor mothers and children have suffered quite a lot because of these bombings. Patients, who are admitted in the hospital units, just operated or under treatment have to find ways of saving their lives when this plane flies over. The most fortunate thing about this plane is that you can hear its sound from a very long distance and you have time for preparation and to seek shelter.

In July 1999, on a Sunday afternoon, several cluster bombs were shelled in the MSF compound and on the children's play ground. Fortunately, these cluster bombs never exploded. Some experts from an international organization came later on to collect and destroyed them. Thank God these ones have not caused any harm to the population so far. Most of the time, the bombs were of a fragmented type, which is more dangerous as the fragments can fly about 2 kilometers away and cause serious injuries if they hit you. The act of bombing innocent people, who are helpless and defenseless, normally causes a lot of stress. Moreover, knowing that the target is the hospital and the building which harbors sick people who are unable to run for shelter, makes this bombing an act of terrorism. The lives of the people who have settled near the hospital are constantly under threat. Planes are, even now, coming every week, flying over in the sky but without dropping any bombs. When you hear the noise of this plane, almost everything comes to stand still and you are not able to concentrate. After a plane passage, you are stressed for almost the whole day. The visits of the Antonov definitely makes our lives very difficult here in terms of concentration, planning and implementation of the program.

⁹ Except from MSF, names of people and organizations have been withdrawn.

Another MSF local staff member working in the Kajo Keji hospital relates:

I was in the refugee camp in Adjumani. Last year, in 1998, at around April, I decided to come back to Kajo Keji. The reason for coming back was because I decided to come and serve my people. I was told that MSF had rehabilitated the hospital and being a nurse, I decided to come and offer my services to the people. Another reason for my decision to return to Sudan was that in the settlement camp where I was, The LRA rebels were scaring us. I remember that when I came, other people had decided to return to Sudan. When I came, I was fully aware of the aerial bombings, but nevertheless I decided to leave Uganda because of the atrocities committed against the population by the rebels of the Lord Resistant Army. I feel that the bombings are inhuman; the bombings are concentrated on the people and much less on the front line. At the moment I live here alone, my children are back in Uganda because of security reasons and better education. The threat of the aerial bombings is disrupting the entire life of the people. Trade is affected, production is affected and schools are affected. At the moment, essential commodities like soap and salt are no longer available in the local market. Last year, following the request of the community, we were able to start a nursery school in Kajo Keji town, where several children attended classes. With the community contribution we have been able to support the teacher and things were going fine. Unfortunately, this year, after one bomb was dropped very close to the school, we have been forced to stop classes. People are scared, and many have abandoned the town for the rural area; others have returned to Uganda as refugees. Most of the people do not turn up for medical services, or they arrive very late in the hospital when the sickness is already badly advanced. I have noticed a significant drop in the attendance at OPD level as well as in the IPD department, during the months of March and April. There is one incident that I remember; it was in April, at around 10 AM. I was attending a child patient who was under transfusion. I heard the sound of the plane but I could not leave the children alone and I just hoped for the best. The plane came and dropped a bomb that fell in the hospital compound. I was terribly scared but fortunately I survived. As a reaction, the mother of the child patient decided to run away with the certitude that the child will die because of the severe sickness.

I am a woman and a nurse. I am a prominent member of the women's group. Last year, we have started several small income-generating projects. These projects were doing well, but because of the constant threat of bombings, all these projects are at a stand-still at the moment. It is difficult to convince the women to dedicate time and energy to some activities that can be destroyed at any time.

What is the outside world thinking about this situation?!

Here we are so isolated and without the possibility to speak about our concerns. Our cry is for the international community to stop this indiscriminate bombing. I am sure that the government knows very well where the SPLA are located. The front line is 40 kilometers away from this town. If they want to fight a war, why don't they bombard the SPLA positions? The Khartoum government pretends to be our leader, but what kind of a leader is that, being only interested in destruction? My impression is that the Khartoum government is only interested in keeping the people of the South totally underdeveloped. In any case, I am sure that any set-back in the liberated areas also has a negative effect on the North. The GOS go extending their destruction even in the neighboring country like in the Adjumani camp in Uganda.

We have no power to go and negotiate with the government; but we hope that through friends and sympathizers, we will be able to get our cry out into the world.

The voices of five children, aged between 11 and 13 years, from Kajo Keji:

We are all living here with our parents, brothers and sisters. Some of the parents are working in the hospital and others are farmers. Most of the families, with only one exception, are reunited and live in Mundari in the vicinity of the hospital. They all came to Kajo Keji during the end of 1997 and early 1998. Before, they were either in the displaced camps or in the refuge camps. All of the children are attending classes at the Daniel Comboni primary school, which is located several miles outside the Kajo Keji town. Four of the children started school in 1998 and one in 1999. There are five primary schools in the Kajo Keji County but no secondary schools. The primary school that was located in the town of Mere has been closed down since the beginning of the year. It has been closed after the aerial bombing. At their school there are 460 children attending daily; all the 7 levels are attended.

When the military plane comes, all classes stop and we run out of the classroom and take refuge in the trenches dug behind the school. Up to now no bombs have been dropped around the school. The school in town was closed because the teachers, the children and the parents were too scared about the continuous passing of the Antonov.

When the Antonov comes, we are very scared and when we are in the trench; we are very silent and lie down. We wonder when the plane will leave and we'll be able to return to the classroom. After the plane has gone, we return to class but we feel very much disturbed and unable to follow the lessons. At the same time the teacher is also scared and unable to teach properly. When we are in the trench, we are scared for ourselves, but also for our parents who are working and could be hurt or killed by a bomb. The people in the Khartoum government are bombarding the area because they want to take our land. They have seen that the land is very productive and rich with various minerals and therefore they want the land so the benefits go to them. They want the land and they would like that the people here, we, become their workers and their slaves. Kids were then asked, "what can be done"?

- We think that we have to collect money to buy weapons and guns to shoot down the plane;
- We have to join hands in order to chase the Arabs;
- We need to have assistance from the outside world in order to stop this war;
- We need to sit down and discuss in order to find a solution to this war;
- We need to find an agreement with the Arabs;
- We suggest that the country should be divided and the North looks after itself, the same for the South.

A representative of a humanitarian organization, operating in Kajo Keji County

Our organization is implementing a program of economic rehabilitation in the Kajo Keji County. This program attracted many people from the refugee and displaced camps. The first step of our program was "trade rehabilitation". At the same time, the program established some resource centers for activities such as brick making, carpentry and black smiting. These were located in the rural area. At present, these programs are at a stand-still.

After the intensification of the bombings early this year, by April/May, we estimated that about 70% of the shops, which were well established, have been closed. People have disappeared, I do not know where they have gone but they are no longer here. Similarly for the resource centers, production has stopped because there is no more market for the items produced. Our projects are badly affected by the threat of the Antonov because people are scared and do not want to invest money in such conditions. At the same time we have decided to move our compound from the town of Mere to a better and safer location. This is really frustrating. The old spirit is no longer there; the excitement of the beginning is gone. The people themselves as well as the local authorities experience this sentiment. From my own point of view, I have to say that I am very disappointed because the interest and excitement has dropped dramatically. From June up to now, I have not seen any possibility of a return to

a normal situation. During the last two months there have been no bombings but there is still no sign of a return of people to the town. It will take time for all of them to regain some confidence and decide to return. What the Khartoum government is achieving with this fairly cheap strategy, is enormous. The panic, the terror and the psychological effects on the entire population are causing more damage than any ground attack. These adverse effects of the aerial bombing are not only affecting the people living in the town. The rural population is also traumatized. Our officer responsible for the agricultural program has decided to leave the program. Farmers who have started producing surplus grains have abandoned this idea due to the market's inability to absorb the products. In addition to the general economic and social set-back, the bombs sometimes cause destruction and death.

At around March/April this year, I was in Nimule for a program review and I witnessed, astonished and powerless, the death of two young girls, who were daughters of a friend of mine. Their death occurred after the explosion of a cluster bomb. During an aerial bombing last year, a cluster bomb was dropped on the town of Nimule. Several small bombs, which became a sort of antipersonnel mine, were found and disposed of. Unfortunately, one of these bombs remained hidden under the grass and exploded when fire was set for clearing the land. The two young girls were playing in the vicinity of the fire when the bomb blasted and killed both of them instantaneously.

A senior member of the civil administration of Kajo Keji says:

The aerial bombing started in 1991; at that time the Mig warplanes were used to bomb this area. Later on, in 1995, the Khartoum government began to use the Antonov planes to bomb the South of the country. This plane flies at a very high altitude and therefore it cannot be disturbed by the machine guns, which are at the disposal of the SPLA. The aerial bombings have not only affected the infrastructure, but also the economy of this place. Since the beginning of this year, we have been witnessing an intensification of the aerial bombings. This in terms of quantities of bombs dropped, but also in terms of the quality of the bombs. In fact the type of bombs that were thrown on us went from conventional ones to the cluster bombs, and now to chemical/bacteriological bombs. Particularly the last ones are threatening our lives constantly. The people have grown quite accustomed to the usual bombs in the past few months. The people have found a mechanism of survival, digging fox holes and bunkers near their houses and their places of work. The holes and the bunkers were protecting them. Now, the issue of this chemical bomb has frightened everybody in a very powerless way: what can we do against gas?

As now we are all traumatized, we do not know if the plane is coming, or when and how. At each sound of a plane, we start thinking of which type of plane it is and if it is going to drop bombs. Most of the people who have returned last year, are now no longer around. The town of Mere is inhabited at the moment by no more than 20 families in comparison to more than 200 families counted last year. I was living here with my family, but now my wife and children's are back in Uganda.

This war is taxing us very badly, us and our future generations. We have been born in war, we have grown up in war and we will probably die in war. In this area there are no military targets at all. Military barracks or camps do not exist; the only military presence is at the front line. Only civilians are living in the towns and the rural area of the South and the Khartoum government knows this very well. The point is, that the intention of the military plane is not to achieve any military gain as such. The main objective is to terrorize and frighten the civil population. The aim is to prevent all sort of development. Today we organized a road maintenance day; as you can see hundreds of volunteers have turned up to work on the road. This has only been possible because the Antonov, which flies over regularly, has not dropped any bombs over the last two months. This social rehabilitation work that you see today, you would not have seen in June or July.

To explain the extent of the disrupting effects of the aerial bombings on the civilian population, we can look at the population movements in the camps. During the months of

May and June, the displaced camps of Bomurye and Kirwa witnessed an increase in the number of registered persons by about 10% compared to the preceding months.

An operating room attendant at the Kajo Keji hospital recalls:

I was in the operating room with the surgeon, attending a patient who had a shoulder injury. The patient was under anesthesia. The Antonov came, we heard the sound and we did not know what to do. We finally decided to remain and we just lied down on the floor. The plane flew over and a bomb was dropped and fell just behind the operating room. All the glasses of the windows got broken and fell inside the operating room, fortunately without injuring the patient or us. We then got up, took the patient to the unit and we went into a bunker because the plane was still rotating over our heads.

I would like to tell another episode in which I was involved and miraculously survived. It was in June, at the beginning of the month at around 10 or 11 AM. I was on duty in the hospital. The plane came and dropped bombs in town. I suddenly decided to leave the hospital and run home. As soon I reached my home, the plane was over the hospital area (I live near the hospital) and ready to drop the deadly bombs. I just had time to take my wife and children to a hole. I lied down on the ground behind a heap of sweet potatoes. The bomb just hit the ground at about two meters from where I was. The blast was so powerful that I was fully covered with soil. Of course, the sound of the explosion was so loud that I was unable to hear for more than a week. Even now I feel that I have not yet fully recovered from this experience. Sometimes I suffer from headache up to the point that I am unable to attend my usual duties. After that bombing, my family and my neighbors were reasoning in a very strange way. I have tried to calm them down, but the decision to leave Kajo Keji had already been taken. Today, after several weeks of relative peace, they have returned to stay with me here and we hope to remain together.

The voice of the field coordinator for a local women's group in Kajo Keji:

Our activities here in Kajo Keji are rehabilitation and development. One of the main objectives is food security and health; during last year, we have been able to organize women of this area and implement a small income-generating program. Most of the women who have been participating very enthusiastically in organizing development activities since the beginning of this year 1999, are no longer living here. They have decided to return to the rural area and some of them have returned to Uganda. The usual time of the Antonov passage is around 10 or 11 AM. Sometimes the plane also comes in the early afternoon. Under such a threat you understand that it is difficult to work or concentrate on any type of activity. The hospital, together with the school, churches and market places are clearly the target of these indiscriminate bombings. It is very sad to see patients, sometimes just out of surgery on the run with their IV in their hands, looking for shelter. Such things should not happen. If the Khartoum government wants to fight, then they have to fight with the soldiers and not with the unprotected people. The strategy of the government is one of total destruction. If the government wants to fight, why do they not go on the ground. If the SPLA is defeated on the ground then they will take over from them and rule. Why the aerial bombing which does not have any military implications?

One farmer in Kajo Keji says:

Although life in the rural area is safer than in the towns, where the concentration of population is high, the adverse effect of the aerial bombing is felt also here. For instance, the various farming activities are regularly affected. For example, the land clearing this year has been delayed. The land clearing is the first activity that is performed each planting season. Normally the land clearing is done by burning the grass. Because of the smoke produced by

the burning grass we were scared of signaling our position to the Antonov bomber and therefore we have been able to set fire to the bush only when the weather was cloudy. The threat of the bombing has therefore caused delays on clearing, planting, weeding and harvesting. This is an evidence of the adverse but indirect effects of the destruction of the bombs.

Testimony of an anonymous civilian (reported by the author of this report):

He told me that he has just returned from Yei and Dungu (New Republic of Congo). He is distressed at the seeming silence around the chemical issue at Lainya, as are so many others. While he was in the Congo to meet his father-in-law, he found the refugees in an unhealthy and unhappy state. They were fairly unanimous in their decision not to return to their homes in The Sudan because of the Antonov, and after hearing of the Lainya incident, they were convinced that they had made the correct decision.

The administrator of Yei hospital recalls:

Since the capture of Yei in 1997, the Antonov is the real danger for the people of the town. Hospital, schools, churches, and returnee's places are the usual targets. During the last year the bombings have intensified because the GOS heard that the population was increasing significantly. The damages caused by the bombings are inestimable. In 1998 one bomb hit the bunker in which hospital patients, workers and attendants took refuge. 7 people were killed on the spot, 48 were injured severely. Some of these injured were taken to the ICRC hospital in Lopiding. In 1999, the Antonov killed many people in Yei town and in other small villages in the County. At the same time it caused severe damages to the hospital and to the properties of the civilian population. We are at the moment living in a quite satisfactory way because the military plane has not dropped any bombs in the past two months. Although the Antonov flies quite regularly over our area, no physical damage has been caused. This year, because of the constant threat of the bombings, we have decided to move part of the hospital to the rural area outside the town.

A clinical officer of the Yei civilian hospital says:

Before coming here, I was living in Nairobi and I could live without looking up to the sky; but now, this Antonov leaves a scare in you and you become very sensitive. I think that the sound, the fear and the anxiety leaves a scare in your mind. This is coupled with instability because you cannot set up in a place. The bombing has cumulated effects. The Sudanese people have been so traumatized that sometimes it is difficult to understand their behavior. I have noticed that during the period of heavy bombings people are terrorized. They may be coming to the hospital for treatment, but they do not have time to listen to the health practitioners. They want some medications and they run away. Another strange behavior is that during bombings, some people start looting. This is something really unexpected. One day, I was doing an examination with my equipment on the table. The plane came and I rushed to the bunker. When I came back my equipment was gone. To my knowledge this is again one of the adverse effect of the war and in particular of the terror of the aerial bombing. These are not the Sudanese people whom I have known in the past.

A NGO Field manager for Yei program says:

I am a Kenya national and I have been working and living in this area for two-and-a-half years now. My major concern is about the military Antonov plane. The psychological effects and the terror of the aerial bombings are touching everybody. Even me, despite the long experience of living under such stress, I am disturbed. Normally I am the one who alerts all the rest of the staff to take refuge in the bunker when I hear the sound of the plane. One time I removed 7 cluster bombs from this compound. Nevertheless I was amazed and surprised when I realized how my mind was affected by this stress. I was in Kenya during my holidays. I live near the Wilson airport with my family. One night I was awakened by the sound of a

commercial plane and jumped out of the bed calling everybody to run into the bunker. Already, the sound of the plane makes everybody very anxious. We have developed a sense that even when we are busy doing something or talking, we can hear the sound from very far away. The aerial bombings are definitely disrupting the entire life of the people. Sick people are scared to attend the hospital, farmers are no longer coming to town to sell their products, traders have stopped supplying goods, and shops are closing down. Life is so threatening that displaced people who live in the Juba County do not turn up for their food ration.

Testimony of the Yei field officer of a humanitarian organization:

I have been in Yei since 1997, just after the liberation of the town. During that year there were no bombings in the center of the town. In early 1998 however, the town and the suburbs witnessed a heavy and nasty bombing. This year, 1999, there has been an intensification of the quality of the aerial bombings. On the 23rd of July, Loka and Lainya, two locations on the Juba road were bombarded. There is a very serious suspicion that the bombs dropped were chemical bombs. The people from the area will be in a better position to explain the effects of such gasses. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning some facts, and the attitude of the UN and other agencies of the OLS consortium. Our impression here in the field is that nobody really cares about the people of South Sudan. Some people (Experts? Investigators?) were sent for an assessment but they never reached the area because they did not have masks. We have been the first to reach the area and what we found was very sad. One person got sick and died, one nurse was admitted in the hospital with symptom of poisoning. Till today, the situation is bad, nobody really bothers to tell us, to tell the population, what is happening. For example, soon after this incident the UN/OLS decided to put the area under security level 4 and instructed all UN personnel not to go or transit around the zone. Actually, the instructions were so restrictive that for one entire month all relief and rehabilitation activities were halted. In fact the UN security informed us that the road from Kaja to Yei was closed (to UN personnel and NGOs working under the umbrella of OLS), and nobody was supposed to leave Yei to go to Lainya. Our organization being a member of the OLS consortium has made us stay in our compound for more than a month. Suddenly on the 3rd of September, a delegation from Lokichoggio came and visited Lainya and Kaja and declared the area safe and therefore activities could start again. The way in which this happened is at least amazing. Today we are still asking ourselves what is going on; really nobody has bothered to give us some reassurance or explanation of the real nature of these gas bombs.

A midwife working in the Loka/Lainya dispensary remembers:

I was here when the chemical bomb was dropped. It was a strange bomb, very different from the one we have been used to receive on our land. One of them just fell near a tukul, and developed a dense smoke, but the construction remained intact. It was clear that the bomb was different and may be in plastic case. After this explosion, people started developing a strange sickness, which were unusual to the normal bombs. Coughing, burning eyes, difficulties to breath, miscarriages, and death. I was admitted to the hospital for almost a month with severe coughing and vomiting blood. It was the rainy season. Just after the bombing the rain came, it filled the hole produced by the impact and suddenly the color of the water turned reddish. The goats and other domestic animals including some birds which drunk that water died, on the spot. Some people from different organizations came here a few days after this incident, and collected soil samples, water samples, blood from sick patients, sputum and other samples to be analyzed somewhere. It is unfortunate that till today we have not received any information from these people. It is clear that for us here on the ground the situation is very scaring. We really do not know what will happen to us, to our lives, in one or two years. These two small towns were very populated a few months ago. Now, as you can see very few people have remained here, mainly the people who work with the organizations operating in this area.

A Bishop's in Lainya recalls:

What I would like to say is that we, the Sudanese people, need a just peace, love and justice. Many people have come like you to collect information, but without peace nothing is possible. With the little peace of today, you have been able to come and see us; with love, we can talk to you and give to you this information and without justice we will not be able to justify our own problems. We the Sudanese, who were exiled in Uganda when our land was liberated, we decided to repatriate voluntarily; this has always been our dream. Unfortunately we have only been able to live in a fairly decent condition for a short time. The Khartoum government started the aerial bombings all over the civilian population, terrorizing us and seriously endangering our lives and our development. Despite this threat we have managed to cope with this events. In fact trenches were dug where we could take refuge. The recent chemical bombs have left all of us with the terror of what will happen to us and to our children. I have to say that this bombing is affecting the rural community as well as the town population. In fact, the rural population is now carrying the burden of the displaced people from the town. As a result, certain areas already have a shortage of food. Moreover, the rural population is suffering from the lack of basic services like clean drinking water, health and education. Despite this poverty, people prefer to live a miserable life than risk being killed by the fragments of the bombs or by the gas of these recent bombs. I would like to say that, living in the bush is not a choice of the people, not sending the children to school is again something in which we have been forced by the terrorism of the Khartoum government. Once again, displacement and child abuse is taking place in our country. This is terribly sad. The guerilla war has no means of defending us against this indiscriminate bombing. On the other hand I am blaming the international community who does nothing to stop the war in Sudan. Many countries have been assisted by the UN system and by the international community but we have always been neglected and abandoned.

Testimony from the representative of an organization operating in Yei:

The main activities of our organization are de-mining and mine awareness. It is estimated that several thousand land mines and antipersonnel mines are disseminated in the Southern Sudan. Our organization is operating from Yei where the HQ is established. Our compound was located in the center of town. In May this year several bombs struck the place and destroyed all our assets and equipment. After that day we decided to move out of the town and at the moment we are here, hopefully in a better and safer place. Our personnel are often requested to intervene after an aerial bombing. Sometimes it is for clearing the area after a cluster bomb has been dropped, other times it is just to blast an unexploded bomb. here are several episodes, which my mind has retained and in particular I would like to tell about two. One night, during an aerial bombing on the town of Yei, people woke up as usual and started to run for refuge. As usual the hospital had been targeted. A mother, whose child was admitted in the children's unit, took her child and ran out of the ward and jumped into a foxhole. The Antonov dropped several bombs. One of these bombs dropped in the hospital was a cluster bomb. One of these small bombs landed in the foxhole where the mother and the child had taken refuge. Fortunately the bomb did not explode, but instead landed on the leg of the woman and penetrated a few centimeters into her flesh. This terrorized everybody including the medical personnel. The decision to call the OSIL people was then taken. One of the staff came and carefully managed to remove the bomb from the flesh and took it away. Another story which has the air of a miracle: One bomb landed in a very populated area near the center of the town. This bomb did not explode, it was a conventional bomb and very big. We had been called, and we fenced off the place putting up signs of danger and then left. But local women decided that it was too dangerous to leave the bomb there and started digging around the bomb in order to soften the soil and allow it to be removed. These women where

so courageous that they managed to create the conditions necessary for the bomb to be carried away. Again, we came and we were able to remove it and take it far away where there was no population. People have developed a capability of recognizing the planes by the sound. It has to be said that the Antonov has a very particular sound, very metallic and unmistakable. Children have also named the planes; *Anak koc*, which means the killer of human being (military planes) and *Amuk koc*, which means mercy planes (relief planes).

An administrator of this organization based in Yei says:

The effects of the Sudanese government's indiscriminate aerial bombings on the civilian populations can be divided into educational, health and economic consequences.

Educational:

When there is a bombing schools get closed for a week or more.

School children do not report back to school and there is a high percentage of absence.

Parents leave the town to go up-country for the security of their children.

The Yei public library is always deserted, members fail in having mental peace for reading.

I am a creative writer, my creativity has now declined as a result of the Antonov bombing as well as my reading culture. When I write a chapter of my work and get interrupted, it takes me a week to restore my intellectual creativity, restart and complete my work.

Donors are always reluctant to fund education programs because of the insecurity, their project may get destroyed or tampered with.

Teachers, especially the most qualified ones, leave the country for neighboring countries.

Health:

Human lives are lost. Physical disabilities are inflicted. Health centers are destroyed. Medical services are interrupted and as a result patients in critical conditions die. Foreign medical expatriates leave the country. Patients resort to traditional healers and use plants rather than coming to the hospital and get bombed.

Economic:

Farmers don't cultivate their farmland due to the bombing; they don't market their products, businesses are brought to halt. Foreign investment is discouraged. Buildings are destroyed and livestock are killed. Environmental damage is caused especially after the recent use of chemical bombs.

Another NGO representative in Yei recalls:

Our organization is promoting farming and trade. Like most of the economics and development activities, we are in a situation of "wait and see". The aerial bombing is causing serious damages to the people in general and it has halted all the development activities, which were flourishing during the year 1997. The most vicious thing is the night bombing. During one of these night raids, one bomb fell just inside our compound. I remember it was about midnight. The bomb hit a tree located at about 20 meters from the main house. The bomb exploded as it touched the tree and we heard all the fragments flying away and falling on us through the zinc plates on the roof and the ceiling boards. Doors and windows were also violently opened by the blast. All this during one very dark and scary night. This is really terrible and dangerous because most of the time we are unable to run out of the house in search of refuge and therefore we are obliged to remain inside the house, under the bed or just near the door.

One businessman in Maridi says:

This is a place, which has enjoyed some peace over the last five years. Our real problem is the Antonov. Even when the bombs are dropped far away, the fragments can reach our home and cause fire and destruction. When the Antonov comes, all our activities are stopped and we run into the bunkers. Unfortunately sometimes people take advantage of the panic and start looting. This is a very bad and strange behavior, which was not part of our society. Without the bombings we are fine here, the security is up to date, we can have our income

and develop our activities. For all the traders, businessmen and for the people in general, this is a serious set-back.

One priest from the Episcopal Church in Maridi recalls:

I have always lived in South Sudan. I have never been a refugee or displaced person. In 1990, on the 24th of January, the Antonov dropped 2 bombs in the compound of my father, which is located at 9 miles outside the town. The bombs killed my mother and elder sister on the spot and 2 other women were wounded on their legs. So, these innocent people relaxing in their houses were killed. On 18 July 1996 again, many people gathered on the Freedom Square for a celebration. At 4PM, the Antonov came and dropped bombs, which fell on the square but without hurting anybody. People were in total panic up to the point that mothers abandoned their small children on the ground. Again in July, I was in the hospital for a pastoral prayer in the operating room. The Antonov came and a poor woman who had just been operated, started crawling in an attempt to reach the door and go into the bunker. In March this year, we were attending a seminar, the plane came and it flew over our heads for over 30 minutes, then dropped some bombs; one child was killed. I have witnessed several other sad stories, all of which make our lives very miserable. The Antonov never bombs any military target such as the front line, they always aim at the civilian population because they want to hinder development and freedom.

The head mechanic of an organization in Maridi town remembers:

One morning I was coming from the football field towards the hospital. The Antonov came and I started running. Then I decided to lie down in a nearby ditch. The plane flew over and suddenly made a U turn back to this direction. At that time I understood that it had the intention of dropping the bombs. I felt that I was not very much comfortable in the place I had chosen. I therefore got up and started running away as far as possible from the place and from the hospital which is normally the preferred target. So I did that, I got up and ran as fast as possible aiming at another safe spot. I stopped at about 200 meters from where I was. I just had time to lie down and a bomb was dropped. The bomb just landed exactly on the same spot I had decided to use as a refuge.

Another staff member of this organization operating in Maridi recalls:

During this year 1999 the town of Maridi has been the target of aerial bombings on several occasions. Therefore we have come to the conclusion that both the hospital and the living compound should be relocated elsewhere. This decision has been taken, but so far, due to some constraints it has not been realized yet. This is just to say how stressful and inhuman life is under the threat of the aerial bombing. The plane can come any time, during the day as well as during the night. On the 23rd of July the Antonov came and dropped 9 bombs just near the riverbank. It is funny, but none of the bombs went off. They all landed on a very swampy area and this is why they did not explode. We suspect that these bombs are chemical as they had been dropped on the same day as the Lainya attack. As we said, it was our intention to move from here. But of course this decision is not simple, particularly with regard for our local staff. If we go, this will demoralize them terribly and the program will be seriously affected. It is difficult to summarize all the negative effects of the Antonov in a few words. If the bombing is going to continue for long time, this will affect our lives forever. Fortunately, over the last two months the Antonov has not been seen and therefore life has returned quite satisfactory and we are performing our duties in a decent way. If you would have come to visit us on the 23rd of July, I would have told you that the best way to continue was to close down the program and go somewhere else. Regarding the dates of the bombings, I have to say that we like to forget these days. The plane comes, stays up in the sky for hours,

then drops a few bombs, then it goes away, then it comes back and so on: it is really a very stressful life. I remember the day that the operating room was once again renovated after it has been damaged by fragments of a bombing. One patient had been operated in the afternoon and taken to the operating room. During the night the Antonov came and again the hospital was targeted and the operating room damaged. All these actions are very demoralizing and discouraging. There are no doubts that civilians and social structures are the target of the aerial bombings. For example, here in Maridi the army barracks are very visible from anywhere, moreover from the sky. As a matter of fact, not even a single fragment has touched these constructions. If you are living and working here, the only desire you have is that this plane is shut down forever.

Testimony from the teachers and head master of Bakita Girls School Narus:

The Bakita primary school is a boarding school. Pupils come from as far as the Nuba Mountains to attend the school. We the teachers and the parents are very proud of the quality of the teaching at this school. Unfortunately, all is not so easy and the main problem is due to the aerial bombings. This year we have 350 registered students. 250 of them are here permanently, the rest are residents of the town of Narus. Last year we had 570 registered students.

The significant drop is mainly due to the insecurity brought by the Antonov. It has to be said that the school has been the target of several bombings and one time it has been damaged by the fragments of two bombs.

These indiscriminate bombings are affecting everybody. If they could just fight between themselves, this would be OK. On the contrary they kill and threaten us poor civilians. This situation affects also our social and economic life. Nobody is really interested in constructing or developing this area because of the uncertainty.

The threat of the bombings has a double negative effect on the education of the children. Because of insecurity they go away, the most fortunate of them find other schools, others just remain in the streets.

Testimony from the Bakita school students in Narus:

One P4 student;

The bombings started in 1997 but then it was not so bad as these days. This year, the Antonov came and released one bomb, which fell on our school. One of our colleagues was in the toilette but she managed to escape and she is alive and here with us. The bomb hit the toilet and destroyed it down to the foundations. I am one of the girls who are the most afraid of planes. Even the relief planes that fly over regularly scare me. We are here struggling, please tell the Khartoum government to stop bombarding our place so we will be able to develop and construct our country. We are also appealing to donors and the UN to supply us with some material so we can dig and built safer bunkers.

One standard 7 student:

When we are in our classes, we are trying to learn. The plane comes and our concentration is gone. If we feel that the plane is going to drop bombs, then we all rush out of the school and look for the trenches. It is difficult for us to keep up with our studies. The Sister has given us some kerosene lamps so we could study during the night. This helps only partially because the Antonov also comes to bomb during the night.

We are here in this school to learn to be able to develop and construct the future of our country. We have constructed a new building but the iron sheets on the roof are too shiny and therefore we are obliged to cover them with some grass. The time of exams is near and we are scared that the Antonov will soon start again and disturb us like it happen last year. We have

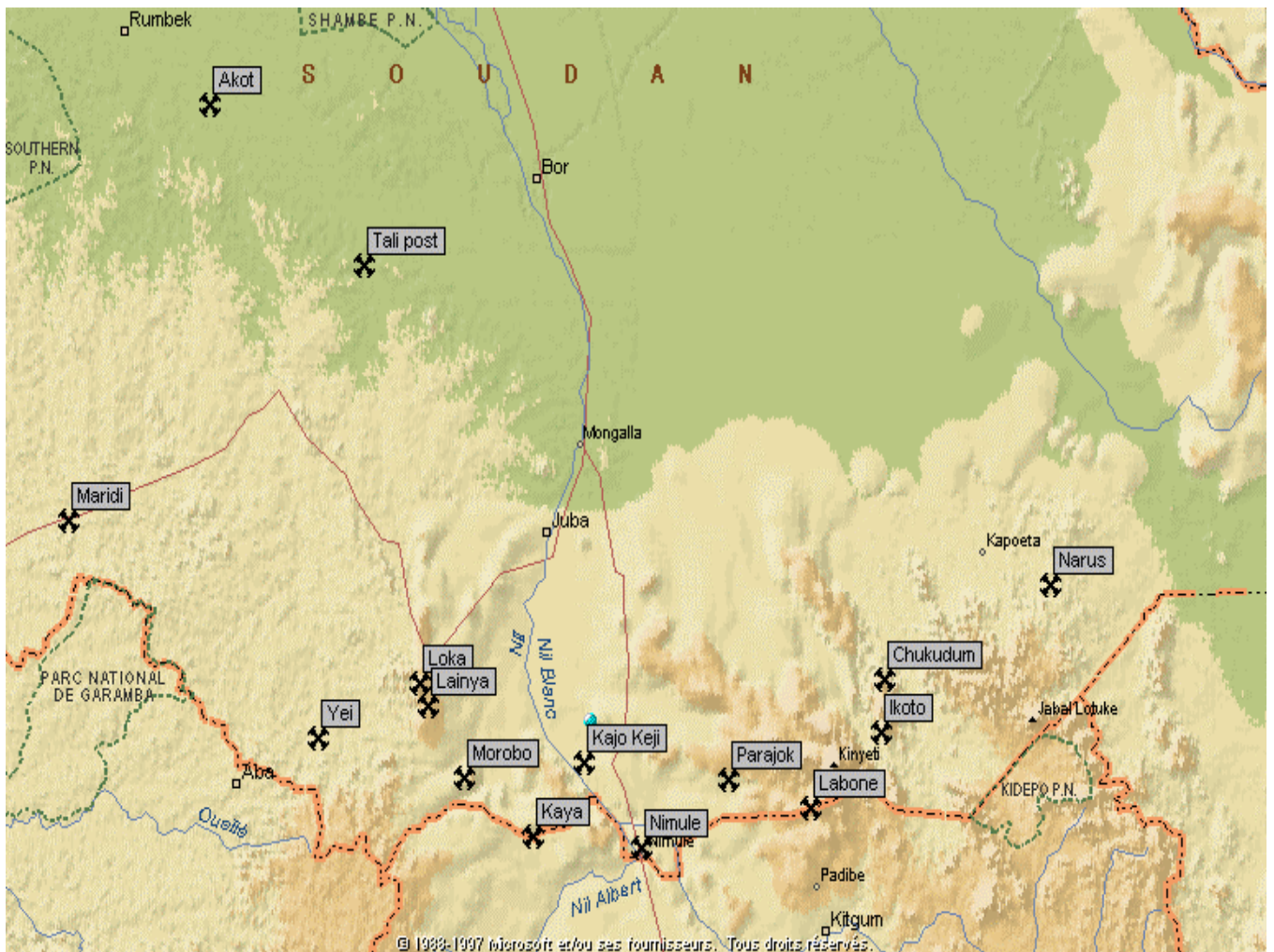
nothing against the Arabs, let them come here, we are generous and tolerant, but to fight us innocent students and poor people using aerial bombing is inhuman and a sign of cowardice. If they want to fight a ground war, they know where the enemy is and we have nothing more to say.

The young girl who narrowly escape death:

I was unwell for a few days suffering from acute diarrhea. For this reason I was often in the toilets located at the end of the compound just behind the school. I was in the toilet when I heard the sound of a plane. I immediately realized that the plane was the Antonov. I got up, ran quickly out of the toilet and start running away from that place. I lied on the ground just in time to hear the explosion of the bomb and the fragments flying all over. After a few seconds I looked towards the place where the toilet was located but I could not see the construction. The toilet was replaced by a big hole, which is still visible.

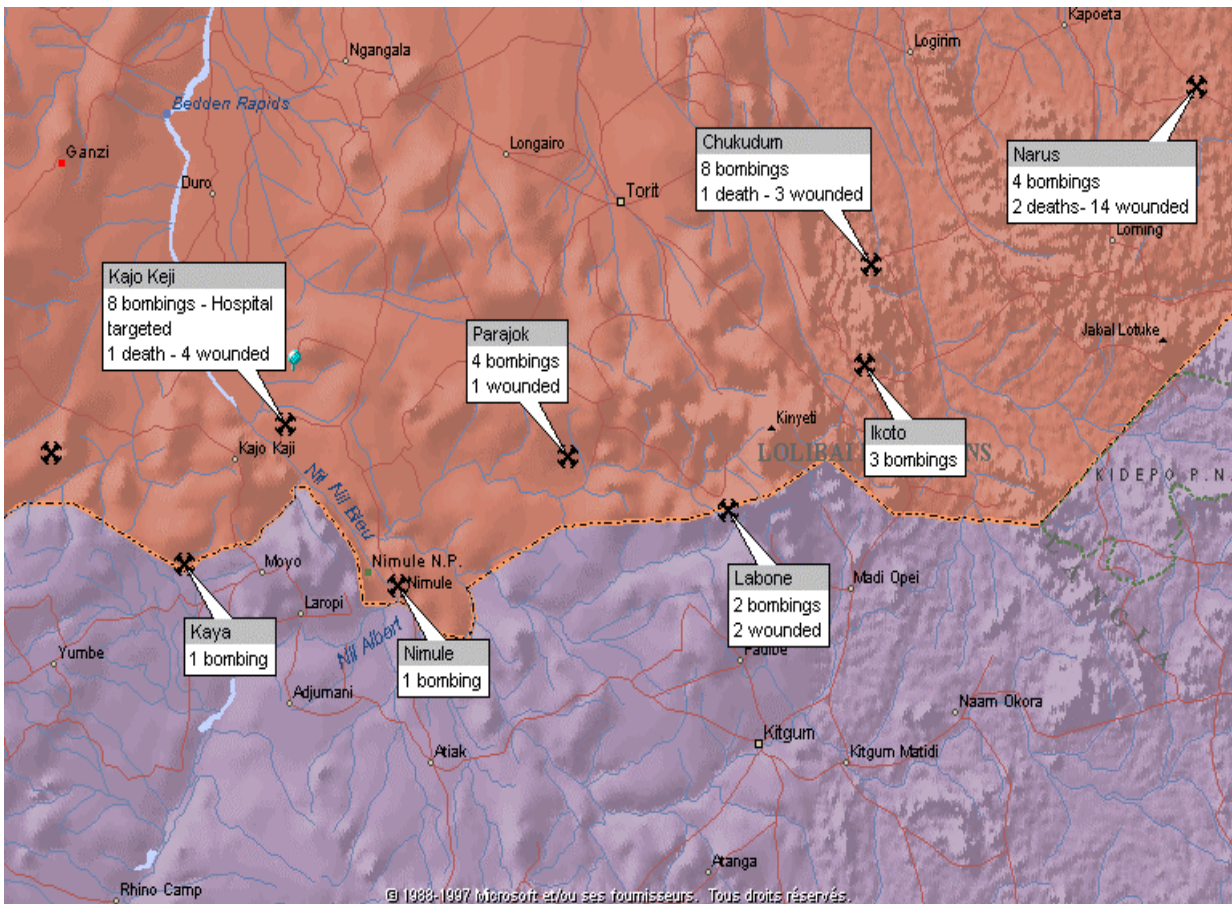
BOMBED CITIES MENTIONED IN THIS REPORT

PROVINCE OF EQUATORIA SOUTH OF SUDAN



DESCRIPTION OF BOMBING CASUALTIES PER SITE

EASTERN EQUATORIA SOUTH OF SUDAN



DESCRIPTION OF BOMBING CASUALTIES PER SITE

WESTERN EQUATORIA SOUTH OF SUDAN

