

North Darfur governor accuses regular forces affiliates of standing behind unrest

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September 6, 2012 (KHARTOUM) - The governor of North Darfur State, Osman Youssef Kibir, has accused an armed group "affiliated with regular forces" of being behind the intensification of unrest in his state, where at least five policemen were killed during confrontations involving different branches of Sudan's regular forces over the last two days.

Speaking to the subtly pro-government Al-Shorog Satellite TV on Thursday, Kibir acknowledged the ethnic dimensions of the unrest that have been plaguing two localities in his state since the assassination of a district commissioner by unknown men on 1 August, attributing current events to the "grievances between tribes due to the conflict in the region."

Kibir, who yesterday declared a state of emergency and appointed a temporary military ruler in the localities of Kutum and Al-Waha, said that the incidents of the last two days were "isolated and will not affect the reconciliation memo signed recently by the area's tribes".

He was referring to the clashes that occurred on Wednesday between members of the Central Reserve Police and the Army (SAF). The clashes led to the death and injury of a large number of people but no exact toll is known.

On Thursday, an armed group set fire to the police headquarters in Kutum after confrontation with members of the Police. Three armed men were killed in the attack. Others were injured.

Kibir said that the group responsible for the events of the last two days is affiliated to "regular forces" but decided to forgo their professionalism and become involved in tribal conflicts. He said that the "marauding" group, as he put it, should have been loyal to the institution not the tribe.

It is known that the central government and regional governments in Darfur conscripted members of Arab ethnic tribes to fight alongside government forces against the insurgency that erupted in Darfur in 2003.

Those Arab militiamen became known as the Janjaweed and are associated with atrocities committed against the African ethnic groups to which rebels are affiliated.

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