Sudan “will shoot down” aircraft

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In May 2016, Sudanese radar detected several unauthorised flights by Aid Agencies using chartered IL76 aircraft. The response from the government, on this occasion the Sudanese Army, was extremely strong.

We are concerned at the language being used in Khartoum and Juba. The most recent statement from the Sudanese Army, on 2nd June 2016, says “This action is considered a serious violation of the aviation regulations and the international laws, so we consider it as a direct affront to the Sudanese sovereignty … [we] will deal decisively with any plane failing to observe the proper procedures and entering the Sudanese airspace without prior permission”.

At the start of this year, the South Sudan government declared: “The South Sudanese government has ordered its army to **shoot down any aircraft** flying across its airspace without permission, citing the increase of unauthorised incursions into the national airspace”.

It’s tempting to dismiss this as not related to regular airline or non-scheduled flying – including long haul overflights – but we’ve learned lessons in the last few years that the unexpected isn’t as distant a threat as it used to be.