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1.2.2. International actors

Since the eruption of the conflict, both the SAF and the RSF have sought support from external actors. The SAF maintained close ties with Egypt²⁹⁰ reflecting long-standing relations between the two countries' militaries.²⁹¹ It has been alleged, including by the experts and the RSF, that Egypt provided the SAF with aerial support, Chinese-made K-8 fighter jets, ammunitions and training, as well as weaponry and military intelligence to the SAF-allied SLA-MM forces.²⁹² While Egypt's minister of foreign affairs denied that his country was providing military support to the SAF,²⁹³ Egyptian president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi pledged his 'continued support' to the SAF during a November 2024 meeting with al-Burhan.²⁹⁴

After re-establishing diplomatic ties with Sudan in October 2023 following an eight-year break,²⁹⁵ Iran began to provide material assistance to the SAF with drones²⁹⁶ such as Iran-made Mohajer-6 and Ababil drones that contributed to subsequent SAF victories over RSF fighters.²⁹⁷ Research published by the Conflict Observatory with funding from the US Department of State (USDOS) concluded that 'with near certainty', the transfer of weapons from Iran to the SAF via flights to Port Sudan airport continued during the reference period of this report.²⁹⁸

Meanwhile, the UAE, viewed as the RSF's most important ally in the past years,²⁹⁹ has repeatedly been accused of supporting the RSF in the current conflict.³⁰⁰ Research published by the Conflict Observatory with funding from the USDOS concluded that 'with near certainty', the transfer of weapons from the UAE to the RSF through Amdjarass airport in Chad,³⁰¹ already addressed in a January 2024 report of the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan,³⁰² continued into the reference period of this report.³⁰³ These findings have been corroborated by numerous other reports,³⁰⁴ including by research conducted by Amnesty International³⁰⁵ and Reuters.³⁰⁶ However, the UAE government denied providing military, logistical, political or financial support to any of the warring parties.³⁰⁷ For further information on the UAE's reported military support for the RSF, see section [1.2.1 Major state and non-state armed groups](#).

The RSF also maintained links to the Russian-supported Libyan National Army (LNA) of Libya's warlord Khalifa Haftar.³⁰⁸ Russia's mercenary army Wagner Group, now renamed 'Africa Corps',³⁰⁹ has also been accused of supplying weapons to the RSF,³¹⁰ including surface-to-air missiles.³¹¹ In response to the Wagner Group's alleged support for the RSF, Ukrainian special forces intervened on behalf of the SAF³¹² and were reported to have started training SAF

personnel in March 2024.[313](#) During the reference period, the Russian government, which has been seeking to establish a Russian naval base in Port Sudan, gradually backed away from supporting the RSF and shifted towards supporting the SAF.[314](#) In November 2024, Russia vetoed a draft UN Security Council resolution that called for an immediate halt of attacks against civilians and for all feasible precautions to be taken by the warring parties to avoid and minimise civilian harm.[315](#)

Saudi Arabia, which had maintained close ties to both General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo prior to the current conflict, has claimed a mediating role over the conflict[316](#) (with no evidence of providing military support to the SAF),[317](#) while also seeking to safeguard its economic interests in the Red Sea region[318](#) and to counter-balance the UAE's military-focused efforts to exert influence in Sudan.[319](#)

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