

2.2.1. Actors involved and territorial control

Darfur is the home region of the RSF, who were originally formed by Darfuri Arabs, particularly the Rizeigat.⁶⁷⁷ The RSF controlled four of the five Darfur state capitals,⁶⁷⁸ having seized Nyala in South Darfur, El Geneina in West Darfur, El Daein in East Darfur, and Zalingei in Central Darfur between October and November 2023.⁶⁷⁹ North Darfur's capital El Fasher as of November 2024 was referred to as 'the last major urban centre in the western Darfur region where the RSF hasn't managed to fully oust the army'.⁶⁸⁰

The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), also called Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM), a Darfur-based armed group with members largely hailing from the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit,⁶⁸¹ were present in Darfur in the form of several splinter groups (for further information, see section 1.2.1 of the previous report ([EUAA report Sudan - Country Focus \(April 2024\)](#))).

SLM-AW, named after its leader Abdel Wahid El Nur, reportedly controlled parts of Jebel Marra,⁶⁸² and had troops present in El Fasher, claiming to protect displacement camps in the area.⁶⁸³

- SLM-MM, under its leader and governor of Darfur region,⁶⁸⁴ Minni Minnawi, was estimated to control the Umbro area in North Darfur and the El Tina border crossing to Chad as well as forming a large portion of the pro-SAF forces in El Fasher together with the JEM.⁶⁸⁵
- SLM-Transitional Council (TC) led by Hadi Idris.⁶⁸⁶
- SLM-Tambour, led by Mustafa Tambour, separated from the SLM-AW in 2018⁶⁸⁷ and was reportedly based in Central Darfur.⁶⁸⁸

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led by Gibril Ibrahim, a Zaghawa allied with the SAF, was involved in active fighting against the RSF in El Fasher during the reference period.⁶⁸⁹

SLM-AW, even though it officially declared neutrality in the SAF-RSF war⁶⁹⁰ through one of its commanders was reportedly reinforcing the anti-RSF coalition in El Fasher.⁶⁹¹ At the beginning of October 2024, SLM-AW and the Sudan Liberation Forces (SLF), an alliance led by El Tahir Hajar,⁶⁹² officially agreed to form a neutral military alliance with the aim to protect civilians as well as commercial and humanitarian convoys in Darfur.⁶⁹³

In April 2024, the coalition of armed groups named Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements (JFASM), also known as the Darfur Joint Force or Sudanese Joint Force⁶⁹⁴ or Darfur Joint Protection Force,⁶⁹⁵ announced that it was abandoning its former neutrality and declared war on the RSF. The JFASM is largely comprised of the SLM-MM and the JEM along with smaller armed groups and its forces are mainly present in North Darfur.⁶⁹⁶ SLM-MM and JEM had already announced their intention to abandon their neutrality in November 2023, accusing the RSF of systematic killings in captured towns.⁶⁹⁷

While the SLM-TC as of October 2024 was described as taking a neutral stance in the conflict,⁶⁹⁸ leader Hadi Idris admitted that some members in El Fasher had broken away to align with the SAF.⁶⁹⁹

SLM-Tambour, who had strongly aligned with the SAF early in the conflict,⁷⁰⁰ in June 2024 reportedly faced defections by a group of fighters in Zalingei, Central Darfur, to the RSF.⁷⁰¹

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