

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 2018[687](#) 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 war[690](#) 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 Force[694](#) 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](#)

[677](#)

Sudan War Monitor, Understanding the fighting in El Fasher, 25 May 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan into violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and related crimes, committed in the Sudan in the context of the conflict that erupted in mid-April 2023, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, 23 October 2024, [url](#), para. 92, 100-101

[678](#)

ACLED, Turning the tide: The SAF's strategic offensive in Khartoum and the RSF's setbacks, 14 October 2024, [url](#); Sudan War Monitor, RSF suffers losses in El Fasher offensive, 14 September 2024, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, Eight Darfur groups unveil plan to reclaim cities from Rapid Support Forces, 28 April 2024, [url](#)

[679](#)

Sudan Tribune, Rapid Support Forces seize Sudanese army base in Central Darfur, 31 October 2023, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, RSF seize control of Sudanese army base in East Darfur, 21 November 2023, [url](#)

[680](#)

TNH, Inside the battle for El Fasher: "Innocent lives are lost every day", 27 November 2024, [url](#)

[681](#)

ACAPS, Sudan - West Darfur pre-crisis profile, 18 July 2023, [url](#), p. 5

[682](#)

PolGeoNow, Sudan Control Map & Timeline: Former Rebels Join Fight - June 2023, 11 June 2024, [url](#)

[683](#)

Sudan Tribune, Darfur holdout group denounces RSF attack on its supply convoy in El Fasher, 29 March 2024, [url](#)

[684](#)

Radio Tamazuj, RSF legal advisor: We no longer consider Minni Minnawi governor of Darfur, 2 April 2024, [url](#)

[685](#)

PolGeoNow, Sudan Control Map & Timeline: Former Rebels Join Fight - June 2023, 11 June 2024, [url](#)

[686](#)

Sudan War Monitor, Hadi Idriss blames Minnawi and Jibril for security deterioration in North Darfur, 23 April 2024, [url](#)

[687](#)

Radio Dabanga, Darfur rebel faction denies attacking village in eastern Sudan, 5 July 2024, [url](#)

[688](#)

UNHCR, Protection Brief Darfur Region, October 2023, [url](#), p. 6

[689](#)

ACLED, Sudan: The RSF sets its eyes on North Darfur, 17 May 2024, [url](#)

[690](#)

UNSG, Children and armed conflict in the Sudan, S/2024/443, 7 June 2024, [url](#), para. 15

[691](#)

PolGeoNow, Sudan Control Map & Timeline: Former Rebels Join Fight - June 2023, 11 June 2024, [url](#)

[692](#)

Also known as Gathering of Sudan Liberation Forces, see International Crisis Group, Halting the Catastrophic Battle for Sudan's El Fasher, 24 June 2024, [url](#), p. 5

[693](#)

Radio Dabanga, Two Darfur movements form 'neutral military alliance' to protect civilians, 2 October 2024, [url](#)

[694](#)

Radio Dabanga, North Darfur: Joint Force seizes 'strategic areas', Zaghawa and Arab leaders sign accord, 3 October 2024, [url](#)

[695](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan into violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and related crimes, committed in the Sudan in the context of the conflict that erupted in mid-April 2023, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, 23 October 2024, [url](#), para. 86

[696](#)

Sudan War Monitor, Darfur Joint Force declares war on Rapid Support Forces, 12 April 2024, [url](#)

[697](#)

Radio Dabanga, Darfur armed movements renounce neutrality in Sudan war, 17 November 2023, [url](#)

[698](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan into violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and related crimes, committed in the Sudan in the context of the conflict that erupted in mid-April 2023, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, 23 October 2024, [url](#), para. 107

[699](#)

Sudan War Monitor, Hadi Idriss blames Minnawi and Jibril for security deterioration in North Darfur, 23 April 2024, [url](#)

[700](#)

PolGeoNow, Sudan Control Map & Timeline: Former Rebels Join Fight - June 2023, 11 June 2024, [url](#)

[701](#)

Radio Tamazuj, Group of SLM-Tambour forces defect to the RSF in Zalingei, 10 June 2024, [url](#); Al-Rakoba, [url](#) [Faction of Tambour forces announces that it is joining RSF in Zalingei], 11 June 2024, [url](#)