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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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