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2.4.2. Conflict dynamics and tactics

□ (a) Al Jazirah

In December 2023, Al Jazirah state fell to the RSF and the SAF withdrew from the state capital Wad Madani, only keeping a limited presence in the western periphery of the state towards Gedaref and Sennar. In March 2024, ACLED described the state as a 'conflict hotspot', where the RSF tried to prevent the SAF from advancing towards Khartoum.[851](#) The RSF's control over the state was marked by numerous reports of attacks on villages and looting,[852](#) as well as killings among the local population.[853](#) Ayin Network between February and October 2024 recorded over 130 RSF invasions of localities in Al Jazirah, with ensuing violence affecting civilians including killings, torture, looting, and in some cases rape.[854](#)

On 20 October 2024, Abu Aqla Keikel, an RSF commander, defected and joined the SAF, reportedly in exchange for an amnesty.[855](#) This led to an uptick in RSF attacks on villages in Al Jazirah, targeting members of Keikel's ethnic group in an apparent retaliation for his defection.[856](#) Between 20 and 25 October, the RSF reportedly carried out major attacks across the state, committing mass killings, sexual violence against women and girls, and looting of markets and homes.[857](#) According to Human Rights Watch, at least 30 towns and villages were attacked, including Rufaa, Tamboul, Al-Sireha, and Azrag, pointing out that this number was probably an underestimation of the reality on the ground.[858](#)

Over the course of 2024, the SAF led several offensives to recapture the state,[859](#) recapturing some areas in the south of the state,[860](#) with clashes ongoing as of December 2024, including near the state capital Wad Madani[861](#) and Umm Al-Qura locality.[862](#)

□ (b) Sennar

In June 2024, the RSF rapidly advanced into Sennar state,[863](#) taking control of the capital Sinja late that month, as well as other localities including Abu Hajar and Dinder.[864](#) The RSF also seized the strategically important Jebel Moya mountain range overlooking Sennar city.[865](#) By July 2024, much of Sennar state had been taken over by the RSF[866](#) and their advance slowed down due to seasonal rains and the movement of some of their troops to White Nile.[867](#) The RSF was accused of attacks on civilians in Sennar, among them indiscriminate shootings of villagers and attempted abduction and sexual violence targeting women in Galgani village in August[868](#) and the shelling of a crowded market in Sennar city in September 2024[869](#) as well as the killing of at least 15 civilians south of Abu Hajar that same month.[870](#)

In October 2024, the SAF launched a military operation to recapture areas of Sennar state, managing to reclaim Dinder and Suki.[871](#) The army further managed to retake Jebel Moya, going into the offensive for the first time in months, according to a political analyst.[872](#) As of November 2024, Sinja was described as the last major RSF stronghold in Sennar state,[873](#) with the RSF cut off from troops in neighbouring Al Jazirah and White Nile states.[874](#) At the beginning of December 2024, the SAF had managed to retake most towns in Sennar state, including its capital Sinja.[875](#)

□ (c) Blue Nile

Conflict broke out in Blue Nile in July 2023, when the rebel group SPLM-N clashed with army forces around Al-Kurmuk,[876](#) with the army reportedly repelling the attack with artillery and air support, followed by a period of relative calm lasting into spring 2024.[877](#) In August 2024, the RSF began expanding its military attacks into Blue Nile state,[878](#) moving from neighbouring Sennar into the Tadamun area and clashing with SAF forces around Qali.[879](#) Even though this attack was initially repelled, the Damazin resistance committee stated that the RSF later returned to raid the area.[880](#) While the RSF initially advanced further in September 2024, taking the town of Roro, they later withdrew and joined their main forces stationed in Sennar state. As of November 2024, however, the RSF reported to have made some advances again, confirming their presence around 70 km from the state capital Damazin.[881](#)

□ (d) White Nile

The RSF expanded into White Nile state from October 2023,⁸⁸² using their base in Jebel Awliya 40 km south of Khartoum to push into White Nile. After the takeover of Jebel Awliya by the RSF in November 2023,⁸⁸³ the RSF seized parts of northern White Nile, pushing the SAF to retreat further south to the large urban centres of the state. While there were occasional reports of clashes and raids by the conflict parties, the frontlines had reportedly remained static as of November 2024.⁸⁸⁴ In November 2024, local media reported several instances of RSF attacks on villages in White Nile, such as the looting of villages in the Umm Rimta locality⁸⁸⁵ and the killing of civilians.⁸⁸⁶ RSF troops reportedly employed hit-and-run tactics, carrying out raids in smaller groups to loot localities and intimidate residents and, subsequently, withdrawing to Jebel Awliya base.⁸⁸⁷

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