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# 2.6.2. Conflict dynamics and tactics

Several drone strikes and attempted but intercepted drone strikes have been carried out by the RSF since May 2024 in SAF-controlled states that were not frontlines as of August 2024, including on Gedaref city of Gedaref state. The location of the targeted cities, according to ACLED, 'well within SAF-controlled areas and away from frontlines, highlight the growing vulnerability of regions previously considered safe from direct conflict'.987 Sources reported that the first drone strikes since the outbreak of the conflict reached Gedaref state around 9 April 2024, targeting SAF-related locations in Gedaref city and El Fau.988 According to ACLED, a drone targeting SAF commander Al-Burhan during a military ceremony in the Red Sea state in late July 2024 similarly highlighted the reach of RSF drones.989 'Sporadic attacks through airstrikes or shelling' on Gedaref state were also noted in the October 2024 report of the UN Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission to Sudan.990

At the start of the conflict in mid-April 2023, 'significant clashes' were reported in Kassala city of Kassala state.991 Ongoing clashes were reported during the reference period in 2024 on the border between Gedaref and Al Jazirah states near El Fau,992 and in Gedaref city in early October 2024.993 In July 2024, the Sudan War Monitor reported that a new front was emerging along the western border of Gedaref state with Sennar state.994 The presence of RSF forces on Gedaref state's border with Al Jazirah and Sennar states reportedly prompted the authorities to prepare for an emergency and activate the popular resistance.995 A September 2024 report of the Sudan Conflict Monitor, published by the Ayin Network and other organisations, noted that some fighting continued around Gedaref, although the RSF's ambitions to expand its territorial gains appeared to have diminished.996 Late October 2024 saw an intensification of fighting,997 including in Gedaref.998 An October 2024 Mada Masr article reported 'an escalation of military tensions in the disputed Fashaga region' along Gedaref state's border to Ethiopia and 'growing concerns over the Sudanese military's continued loss of strategic positions, particularly in the eastern […] states.'999

In mid-September 2024, sources reported clashes in Port Sudan between the Sudanese military and fighters from a local Beja community.1000 Reportedly, these were the first clashes in Port Sudan, which had remained relatively unaffected by the conflict1001 since the SAF had seized an RSF military base there on 17 April 2023.1002 Citing analysts, an Al Jazeera article noted that the clashes reflected growing tensions between eastern tribes and the army, with a number of tribes fearing that the army's dominant presence was threatening tribal land ownership.1003

The UN Human Rights Council noted in its October 2024 report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan that since the outbreak of conflict in April 2023, a number of

states in the country had declared states of emergency including in regions of Gedaref and Eastern Sudan, allowing ‘joint security forces, including the SAF, its military intelligence and military police, and regular police forces’ to enforce the law, including to arresting and detaining individuals.1004 Sources reported arbitrary detentions in Gedaref state during the reference period targeting foreigners, particularly Ethiopian refugees, and citizens for alleged RSF support, foreign influence and activism.1005 In an article published in July 2024, the Sudan Tribune noted that Sudanese military intelligence in Gedaref state arrested and tried civilians on tribal and religious grounds, as well as activists calling for an end to the war.1006

According to a September 2024 report of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and other organisations, the spread of the conflict into eastern Sudan, including into agriculture-rich Gedaref state, could worsen the ‘already dire food security situation […] dramatically’.1007

Child recruitment in the context of popular mobilisation was reported in the October 2024 UN Human Rights Council’s Independent International Fact-Finding Mission report in Kassala, Gedaref and Red Sea states.1008

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