



Please cite as: EUAA, '[2.2. Conscripts, draft evaders, forced recruitment to armed groups](#)' in *Sudan: Country Focus*, October 2026.

2.2. Conscripts, draft evaders, forced recruitment to armed groups

2.2.1. Conscription, mobilisation and forced recruitment by the Sudanese Armed Forces

○ (a) Conscription

In Sudan, military service is governed by the 1992 National Service Law²⁸⁷ and the 2007 Sudanese Armed Forces Act²⁸⁸ amended in 2013.²⁸⁹ A COI report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands published in December 2025 noted, based on consulted confidential sources, that while the 1992 National Service Law remained in force, it was not 'actively applied and enforced by the TSC and the SAF'.²⁹⁰

Article 7 of the 1992 National Service Law states that 'every Sudanese citizen aged from eighteen years to thirty-three years of age is subject to national service'.²⁹¹ Article 9.1 of the 1992 National Service Law states that 'the duration of service is 24 months',²⁹² that can be reduced to 12 months for university graduates, high institutes or equivalent, and to 18 months for those having completed secondary high school.²⁹³

One source stated that the 2013 amendment to the Sudanese Armed Forces Act of 2007 raised the maximum age for military service from 33 to 45.²⁹⁴ However, an army source interviewed by Dabanga in February 2025 stated that 'the average age of soldiers in the army is over 35 years, which is a non-combat age'.²⁹⁵ Further and corroborating information on this raise of age limit could not be found amongst the sources consulted.

○ (b) Mobilisation

In June 2023, Al-Burhan called for a general mobilisation of ‘all youth and all those capable to defend’[296](#) to join the SAF.[297](#) In November 2025, after the fall of El Fasher, Al-Burhan and the Sudanese Security and Defence Council reiterated a declaration of general mobilisation.[298](#)

Recruits under these general mobilisations are called *Mustanfareen* (the mobilised).[299](#) The SAF oversee initial mobilisation and training.[300](#) Civilians have been mobilised under different structures, including directly enlisting in the SAF,[301](#) joining neighbourhood defence units,[302](#) and local resistance structures.[303](#) Mobilisation committees were organised at local, state and federal levels.[304](#) *Mustanfareen* have joined the Popular Resistance or Popular Mobilisation, a coalition of armed factions allied to the SAF, and have received direct support, including weapon supply, and training from the SAF.[305](#) The *Mustanfareen* were described as ‘often young and unaccustomed to handling arms’.[306](#) As reported by Dabanga based on a survey conducted among soldiers in Gedaref, more than 85 % of the soldiers ‘had no more than primary education and most of them said that they had enlisted in the army because they had no job options, and most of them were from poor or very poor classes’.[307](#) One SAF soldier interviewed by Dabanga stated having undergone a three months training before being deployed, without having received teaching materials related to human rights concepts.[308](#) As noted by Al Jazeera in 2023, another mobilised young man reported having received 10 weeks of training by the SAF.[309](#)

Volunteers were either armed to join military operations or tasked with reconstruction and service provision in territories regained by the SAF.[310](#)

Mobilisation was also conducted along tribal lines, such as the arming of the members of the Al-Shukryia tribe in Al Jazirah state in December 2024, [311](#) an Arab group in eastern Sudan.[312](#) Islamist organisations reportedly have a level of influence on the popular mobilisation, such as recruiting as well as conducting training for mobilised civilians, and links to the army.[313](#) For further information see section 1.2. Actors of the conflict of the [EUAA Sudan: Security Situation report \(February 2025\)](#).

○ (c) **Forced recruitment**

For information on child soldiers, see section [2.7.2. Child soldiers](#).

A COI report published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in December 2025 noted from a confidential source that in some instances members of the SAF had used fear or explicit coercion to recruit civilians.[314](#) An article from The National reported in November 2025 on a recruitment campaign ‘that preys on the

poor, fuelled by hate speech and accusation of treason against any man who refuses to join the army's fight'.[315](#)

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