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2.2.3. Defection and desertion

Article 169 of the Sudan Armed Forces Act establishes the punishment for desertion as 'imprisonment, for terms not exceeding five years together with the possibility of deprivation of all, or part of the pension, or privileges.'[331](#)

Since the beginning of the conflict between the SAF and the RSF there has been a 'phenomenon of military commanders changing sides'.[332](#) In April 2026, Major General al-Nour Ahmed Adam had reportedly defected from the RSF and joined the SAF.[333](#) Pursuant to his defection, it was reported that he was stripped of his military rank and sentenced to death *in absentia* by the RSF.[334](#) In May 2026, Ali Rizqallah Al-Safana, who was considered to be among RSF senior commanders, defected to the SAF. Hemedti later stripped him of his military rank and sentenced him to death *in absentia* for desertion.[335](#) As reported in the EUAA Country Focus on Sudan (2025), section [2.2 Conscripts, draft evaders, forced recruitment to armed groups](#), an earlier instance of defection from the RSF to the SAF in October 2024 by Abu Agla Keikel, then a commander of an RSF-aligned force in eastern Al Jazirah state, was followed by large scale retaliatory attacks by the RSF on civilians in Keikel's home region, as well as on members of his tribe.[336](#)

The Sudan Tribune reported in April 2025 on a speech by Hemedti in which he allegedly 'called on officers who "had deserted service" to report to the front lines immediately'.[337](#)

On the other side, it was reported in April 2026 that General Hassan Adam Al Hassan of the SAF allied SPLM-N had defected to join the Taasis.[338](#)

In July 2025, Darfur24 reported on SAF soldiers from the 16th and 21st divisions around El Fasher either deserting their position and fleeing or defecting to the RSF. The article cites hunger, poor living conditions and low wages as reasons for desertion or defection.[339](#)

Additional information on the treatment of deserters from the SAF within the reference period could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

- [331](#)

Sudan, Armed Forces Act, 2007, 5 December 2007, [url](#)

- [332](#)

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PBS, A top paramilitary commander defects to Sudan's military as war enters 4th year, 20 April 2026, [url](#); The Arab Weekly, When an RSF general switches sides, 28 April 2026, [url](#)

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Sudan Tribune, Sudan paramilitary leader sentences defected general to death, 23 April 2026, [url](#); Darfur24, RSF court sentences defected commander al-Nour al-Qubba to death in absentia, 24 April 2026, [url](#)

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Middle East Monitor, Sudan: Hemedti strips defected RSF commander of rank, sentences him to death in absentia, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

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HRW, Sudan: Rapid Support Forces target civilians, 10 November 2024, [url](#); ACLED, Defection and violence against civilians in Sudan's al-Jazirah state-November 2024, 18 November 2024, [url](#)

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Sudan Tribune, Musa Hilal's group urges tribes to ditch RSF, claims force losing control, 5 April 2025, [url](#)

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Darfur24, SAF affiliates complain of difficulty of war in El Fasher amid widespread hunger, 24 July 2025, [url](#)