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2.5.1. Situation in RSF-controlled areas

Non-Arab/African groups in Darfur

According to different definitions, there are between 30 to 90 ethnic groups in Darfur, including the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa, which are the largest groups, and other groups such as Tunjur, Meidob, Berti, Birgid, and Daju. Darfur's Arabs comprise about 35 % per cent of the population of the region.[421](#) Scholars refer to ethnicity in Darfur as a complex mosaic of multiple identities rather than a binary opposition between Arabs and Africans.[422](#) 'Ethnic labels are complex in Darfur, as explained by the New Humanitarian. 'Both "Africans" and Arabs are Black and Muslim, have been present in Darfur for centuries, and have intermarried with 'some non-Arab groups claiming Arab ancestry and others having become Arabised over time'. Conflicts between Arabs and non-Arabs groups 'have historically been rooted in competition over land and natural resources, compounded by drought and the interventions of successive governments in Khartoum.' Across ethnic lines, all communities in Darfur have shared a historical experience of marginalisation by central authorities in Khartoum.[423](#)

As of April 2026, Darfur, the western part of the country, was almost entirely controlled by the RSF and its allied militia.[424](#) These forces have systematically targeted non-Arab/African groups [425](#) such as the Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit [426](#) and Berti[427](#) through mass killings, attacks on IDP camps, torture, looting, and arson attacks against homes, villages and crops.[428](#) Waves of ethnically motivated killings have been perpetrated in Darfur, and notably in West Darfur, in 2023 when non-Arab/African groups, and notably the Masalit, have been targeted by the RSF and allied Arab militias.[429](#) Among others, the Burgo,[430](#) the Eringa and the Tama have reportedly been affected by RSF violence.[431](#) As indicated by ACAPS in 2025, since the start of the conflict, targeted ethnic groups in Darfur included, but were not limited to, the Dajo, Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa.[432](#)

The 2025 UN FFM documented that acts committed by the RSF against ethnic groups included killings, torture, cruel and inhuman treatment, rape and other forms of sexual violence, as well as looting, pillage, and destruction of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population,[433](#) including food, medicine, and relief supplies.[434](#)

El Fasher, which had been the last remaining SAF stronghold in Darfur, fell to the RSF on 26 October 2025 following an 18-month siege. The RSF progressively cut off civilians from food, water, medical supplies, and humanitarian assistance,[435](#) including through the construction of an earth berm around the city reaching 68 kilometres in length by late September 2025, designed to block the entry of food and medicines, preventing civilians from fleeing[436](#) and leading people in the city to starvation.[437](#)

The Sudanese Doctors Network (SDN) documented dozens of direct killings of civilians in an ethnic cleansing operation in El Fasher in October 2025. In social media footage recorded by RSF soldiers, the troops repeatedly used the slander *falangayat*, a slur used by the RSF to refer to 'African' tribes in Darfur, tracing back to a term used to describe slaves.[438](#) The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reported an increase in dehumanising language, hate speech [439](#) and accounts from survivors described being called slaves and subjected to ethnic slurs by the RSF soldiers. [440](#)

The city has a predominantly non-Arab population, particularly the Zaghawa and Fur.[441](#) These communities were among those most acutely affected by the violence. RSF fighters openly stated their intention to eliminate non-Arab communities. Survivors cited fighters as saying: "'Is there anyone Zaghawa among you? If we find Zaghawa, we will kill them all'" and "'We want to eliminate anything black from Darfur.'" UN OHCHR reported that 'Zaghawa and Fur women and girls were targeted during sexual violence, while women perceived as Arab were often spared'. [442](#) Reports highlighted RSF executions of civilians, including those with disabilities, during the takeover of El Fasher, alongside abductions for sexual violence.[443](#) Interviews with survivors indicated that many killings went unrecorded and that abductions and ransom demands soared, The New Humanitarian reported.[444](#) In an investigation conducted by Lighthouse Reports, Sudan War Monitor and Sky News, two sources from the RSF confirmed that these killings were, at least in part, carried out on the basis of ethnicity. They detailed strategic planning to target specific ethnic groups within the city. One of the commanders explained that the RSF allowed members of non-targeted ethnic groups to flee while forcing others to remain in the city. The paramilitaries also removed non-Arab fighters within their ranks and allied ranks and prevented them from entering the city during the attack. These men were reportedly gathered in nearby towns in order to ensure they would not intervene to stop the massacre of their own ethnic groups.[445](#) During the siege, thousands fled the city and nearby camps, bringing the RSF to label people who remained in El Fasher as collaborators of its adversaries, despite the fact that the majority could not afford to leave and were experiencing famine.[446](#)

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reported ethnically motivated human rights violations targeting the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa communities committed by the RSF in El Fasher.[447](#) Some observers have characterised the violence in El Fasher, as 'genocidal' in its intensity, and scope, as well as in its 'specific targeting' of non-Arab Darfuri population.[448](#)

In the months leading to the April 2025 attack on the Zamzam camp – an IDP camp close to El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur – the RSF blocked all food, water, fuel, and essential goods from entering the camp and systematically attacked those attempting to bring in supplies. To survive, many families resorted to feeding children with animal feed such as peanut shells (known as *ambaz*[449](#)).[450](#)

In the same period, in the Umm Kadada locality in North Darfur, the RSF reportedly carried out attacks on villages predominantly inhabited by members of the Berti community, resulting in the killing of at least 45 civilians. [451](#)

The RSF has used sexual violence as 'a deliberate strategy of domination and humiliation aimed at destroying communities,' with 'women reportedly raped in front of relatives and detained for days in conditions of extreme abuse amounting to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment' as

reported by UN OHCHR.⁴⁵² At least 104 survivors of the attack on Zamzam camp – including 75 women, 26 girls, and 3 boys, mostly from the Zaghawa ethnic group – were subjected ‘to rape, gang rape, and sexual slavery, both during the attack and along exit routes.’⁴⁵³ For additional information see section [2.6 on women and girls](#).

The UN HRC FFM found that the systematic pattern of ethnically targeted killings, sexual violence, destruction, and public statements explicitly calling for the elimination of non-Arab communities showed clear genocidal intent.⁴⁵⁴ The scale, coordination, and public endorsement of the operation by senior RSF leadership indicated that the crimes committed in and around El Fasher were systematic.⁴⁵⁵ In January 2025, the US Department of State (USDOS) noted that the RSF perpetrated genocide in the Darfur region during the war and imposed sanctions on Hemedti and RSF-linked entities.⁴⁵⁶ In October 2025, the EU extended the sanction framework established in 2023 against those responsible for destabilising Sudan and obstructing its political transition, to October 2026.⁴⁵⁷

Incidents of ethnic-based targeting, as reported by sources during the updated reference period, included but are not limited to:

- On 11–13 April 2025, the RSF launched a three-day offensive on Zamzam IDP camp in North Darfur, killing at least 1 013 civilians, of whom 319 were summarily executed either in the camp or as they attempted to flee. Some were killed in their homes during house-to-house searches, others in the main market, schools, health facilities, and mosques.⁴⁵⁸
- Following the capture of Zamzam camp on 13 April 2025, satellite imagery analysed by the Yale School of Public Health Humanitarian Research Lab indicated that RSF forces were deliberately burning the camp to the ground, with the area of damage equivalent to 165 standard football pitches. RSF forces cut off all roads in and out of the camp, restricting freedom of movement and preventing civilians from fleeing.⁴⁵⁹
- Following the capture of El Fasher in October 2025, reports indicated that approximately 460 patients and companions were killed when RSF forces entered Al-Saudi Maternity Hospital in the city, with other medical centres in the Daraja Oula and Al-Matar neighbourhoods also targeted. Over 6 000 pregnant women were left with no access to medical or reproductive health services.⁴⁶⁰
- On 27 October 2025, RSF fighters reportedly executed civilians in houses and those seeking refuge in Rashid dormitory at El Fasher University. According to testimonies received by SIHA Network, more than 300 patients were killed in Al-Saudi and Plan hospitals, including pregnant women and children.⁴⁶¹

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