



Please cite as: EUAA, '[1.1.2. Main conflict dynamics](#)' in *Sudan: Security Situation*, October 2026.

1.1.2. Main conflict dynamics

Intense levels of conflict persisted during 2025 as the fighting expanded into new areas.⁷⁰ In a large-scale military offensive,⁷¹ the SAF reconquered Sinja (Sennar state) in November 2024,⁷² the city of Wad Madani (Al Jazirah state) in January 2025,⁷³ and eventually Khartoum city in March 2025,⁷⁴ and the entirety of Khartoum state in May 2025.⁷⁵ Since then, frontlines of hostilities shifted from central Sudan to regions in the south and west⁷⁶ (Kordofan and North Darfur)⁷⁷ as the RSF refocused its military objectives.⁷⁸

Particularly from May 2025 onwards, Kordofan became a major theatre of conflict as the warring parties sought to seize strategic areas in the region.⁷⁹ Notably, control over the strategically located city of Bara (North Kordofan)⁸⁰ shifted several times during the reference period.⁸¹

In June 2025, the RSF captured the strategic border triangle area between Sudan, Egypt and Libya in northwestern Sudan's Northern state,⁸² known as the El Uweinat area. The group thus secured access to supplies and reinforcements from Libya⁸³ while severing military supply routes for SAF-aligned forces that were stationed in El Fasher at the time.⁸⁴

In Darfur, as part of the military offensive to capture El Fasher (North Darfur) launched in May 2024, the RSF conducted a large-scale assault on the Zamzam IDP camp in April 2025, killing civilians, taking hostages and pillaging civilian structures.⁸⁵ Continued intense fighting in El Fasher resulted in the RSF's conquest of the city on 26/27 October 2025 following an 18-month siege, with reports of serious acts of violence being committed.⁸⁶

Reporting on events around the capture of El Fasher, the UN independent international fact-finding mission (FFM) for the Sudan concluded that the RSF engaged in 'widespread and systematic' violence. These acts included large-scale killings, mass-scale rape, torture and other cruel treatment, as well as deliberate starvation of residents through the destruction of basic livelihoods and the denial of medical care and humanitarian aid during the prolonged siege.⁸⁷ Acts of violence showed an open intent to target members of African communities (non-Arabs), notably the Zaghawa.⁸⁸ The mission thus concluded that the RSF had acted 'with genocidal intent' and committed crimes against humanity and war crimes.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, fighting continued in parts of Darfur through to August 2026,⁹⁰ with strikes attributed to the SAF targeting RSF-controlled areas in the region, causing civilian casualties.⁹¹

By late 2025, the conflict had developed into a 'deeply fragmented' and 'ethnically charged' war. Fighting had escalated significantly as a result of mobilisation of civilians along tribal and ethnic lines for fighting.⁹² A proliferation of advanced drones enhanced the warring parties' combat capabilities, resulting in prolonged fighting⁹³ and allowing hostilities to continue

independently from seasonal weather conditions. By the first half of 2026, attacks by armed drones had become the undisputed primary cause of civilian fatalities; Kordofan was the region most affected by fatal drone strikes on civilians.⁹⁴ The use of drones by the RSF and SAF increasingly spread to areas outside Kordofan and Darfur, with strikes hitting targets in states such as Khartoum,⁹⁵ White Nile,⁹⁶ River Nile,⁹⁷ and Red Sea,⁹⁸ all located deep inside SAF-held territory at some distance from the main frontlines.⁹⁹

In parallel, fighting on the ground between the SAF and the RSF spread to Blue Nile state in January 2026, involving clashes between the SAF and RSF/SPLM-N-Al-Hilu and SAF airstrikes.¹⁰⁰ Hostilities further intensified in the state in February 2026 and were ongoing as of late August 2026.¹⁰¹ The town of Kurmuk, situated at the border of Blue Nile state with Ethiopia, changed hands repeatedly between March and August 2026.¹⁰² ACLED noted that the RSF's new focus on Blue Nile state was aimed at reopening the fight over control of central Sudan (Sennar, Al Jazirah, and Khartoum states).¹⁰³

As of April 2026, both warring sides were reportedly locked in a 'military impasse' across the country.¹⁰⁴ However, July 2026 saw an offensive of the SAF and aligned forces in North Kordofan that led to their recapture of the Al Sadarat highway (a key logistical route connecting Khartoum and El Obeid),¹⁰⁵ as well as the towns of Bara, Jabra El Sheikh, Um Sayala,¹⁰⁶ Gereij, and Um Girfa located along the road.¹⁰⁷ This allowed the SAF to restore access to the state capital of El Obeid,¹⁰⁸ a SAF-controlled city which is strategically located between the largely SAF-controlled east and the RSF-held west of the country¹⁰⁹ and has been facing siege-like conditions during the conflict.¹¹⁰ Despite suffering territorial losses, the RSF continued its campaign to take control of El Obeid as of August 2026.¹¹¹

The RSF's recent defeats on the battlefield were preceded by signs of growing discontent and infighting within the group's core ranks¹¹² alongside fractures in its alliance with non-Arab factions operating in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states as part of the Taasis alliance.¹¹³ Following the military setback, RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo was reported to have called on local tribes to mobilise¹¹⁴ and join operations in Kordofan as well as participate in a new offensive toward Khartoum.¹¹⁵

- [70](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 9

- [71](#)

International Crisis Group, Sudan's RSF Proclaims Parallel Government, Raising Threat of Partition, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

- [72](#)

Sudans Post, SAF recaptures Sennar State capital, Sinja, 23 November 2024, [url](#)

- [73](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 10

- [74](#)

International Crisis Group, Sudan's RSF Proclaims Parallel Government, Raising Threat of Partition, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

- [75](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 10; Al Jazeera, Sudan's army declares Khartoum state 'completely free' of paramilitary RSF, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

- [76](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 12

- [77](#)

Al Jazeera, Students among 17 dead in RSF drone attack in Sudan's White Nile State, 12 March 2026, [url](#)

- [78](#)

Horner, J., The falcons and the secretary bird: Arab Gulf states in Sudan's war, ECFR, 30 July 2025, [url](#)

- [79](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 11

- [80](#)

LWJ, Sudanese Armed Forces gains in civil war force strategic adjustment from paramilitia rival, 6 August 2026, [url](#)

- [81](#)

Dabanga, Sudanese army claim capture of strategic North Kordofan towns, 26 July 2026, [url](#); Dabanga, SAF confirms loss of Bara as fighting escalates across Sudan, 17 March 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Sudanese army retakes Bara, secures el-Obeid in North Kordofan, 6 March 2026, [url](#); OHCHR, Sudan: Appalling reports of summary executions and other serious violations, as RSF makes major territorial gains in El Fasher and North Kordofan, 27 October 2025, [url](#)

- [82](#)

International Crisis Group, Capture of Tri-border Area Marks Another Twist in Sudan's Civil War, 20 June 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Sudan's paramilitary RSF say they seized key zone bordering Egypt, Libya, 11 June 2025, [url](#); Dabanga, SAF evacuates 'strategic' Sudan-Libya-Egypt border triangle following RSF takeover, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

- [83](#)

International Crisis Group, Capture of Tri-border Area Marks Another Twist in Sudan's Civil War, 20 June 2025, [url](#)

- [84](#)

Arab Weekly (The), Sudan's RSF tighten grip on army supply lines, shifting military balance, 23 June 2025, [url](#)

- [85](#)

AI, "A Refuge Destroyed": RSF Violations in Darfur's Zamzam Camp for Internally Displaced Persons, December 2025, [url](#), p. 5

- [86](#)

AI, City Under Siege, Children Under Fire: Rapid Support Forces' Crimes Against Humanity in North Darfur, July 2026, [url](#), pp. 9, 11; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 12

- [87](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Sudan: hallmarks of genocide in El Fasher – Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, A/HRC/61/77, 10 March 2026, [url](#), para. 114

- [88](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Sudan: hallmarks of genocide in El Fasher – Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, A/HRC/61/77, 10 March 2026, [url](#), paras. 23, 60, 75

- [89](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Sudan: hallmarks of genocide in El Fasher – Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, A/HRC/61/77, 10 March 2026, [url](#), paras. 116-117

- [90](#)

MEMO, Sudanese official says army pushes back RSF in two areas of North Darfur, 5 August 2026, [url](#); UN News, Sudan war: Drone attacks damage key aid routes, 9 June 2026, [url](#)

- [91](#)

BBC News, Sudan army drone strike on court session kills 35, rights group says, 3 August 2026, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, Sudanese army drone strike kills two in West Darfur, 13 May 2026, [url](#); Dabanga, 10 killed, seven injured in 'SAF drone strike' on South Darfur market', 9 March 2026, [url](#)

- [92](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 8

- [93](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/61/24, 13 January 2026, [url](#), para. 13

- [94](#)

UN News, Armed drones leading cause of civilian death in Sudan war: UN rights chief, 11 May 2026, [url](#)

- [95](#)

UN News, Armed drones leading cause of civilian death in Sudan war: UN rights chief, 11 May 2026, [url](#)

- [96](#)

OHCHR, Sudan: Türk appalled by surge in deadly drone attacks on civilians in Kordofan and White Nile, 12 March 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Students among 17 dead in RSF drone attack in Sudan's White Nile State, 12 March 2026, [url](#)

- [97](#)

Al Jazeera, Drone strike plunges Sudan major cities into darkness as civil war rages, 18 December 2025, [url](#)

- [98](#)

International Crisis Group, Drone Attacks on Port Sudan Mark Dramatic Escalation, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

- [99](#)

PolGeoNow, Sudan Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 August 2026, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Sudan Approximate Territorial Control, as of 30 July 2025, n.a.

- [100](#)

ACLED, Blue Nile: From peripheral front to central battleground in the Sudan conflict, 26 January 2026, [url](#)

- [101](#)

Sudan Tribune, Sudan army deploys allied reinforcements to Blue Nile after rebel gains, 1 September 2026, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, Over 20 killed in Blue Nile clashes as fresh violence triggers mass displacement across Sudan, 12 August 2026, [url](#)

- [102](#)

Al Jazeera, Sudan army says RSF advance on key town bordering Ethiopia, 13 August 2026, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, Sudanese army recaptures strategic border town of Kurmuk, 8 July 2026, [url](#); Sudan War Monitor, Map: Sudanese Rebels Overrun Army Garrison at Ethiopia Border, 24 March 2026, [url](#)

- [103](#)

ACLED, Blue Nile: From peripheral front to central battleground in the Sudan conflict, 26 January 2026, [url](#)

- [104](#)

Al Jazeera, After three years of war, Sudan army and RSF locked in military impasse, 16 April 2026, [url](#)

- [105](#)

LWJ, Sudanese Armed Forces gains in civil war force strategic adjustment from paramilitia rival, 6 August 2026, [url](#); Sudan War Monitor, Videos | Sudanese Army Restores Khartoum–El Obeid Road Link, 27 July 2026, [url](#)

- [106](#)

Sudan War Monitor, Videos | Sudanese Army Restores Khartoum–El Obeid Road Link, 27 July 2026, [url](#); Dabanga, Sudanese army claim capture of strategic North Kordofan towns, 26 July 2026, [url](#)

- [107](#)

Sudan War Monitor, Videos | Sudanese Army Restores Khartoum–El Obeid Road Link, 27 July 2026, [url](#)

- [108](#)

Sudan War Monitor, Videos | Sudanese Army Restores Khartoum–El Obeid Road Link, 27 July 2026, [url](#); Dabanga, Sudanese army claim capture of strategic North Kordofan towns, 26 July 2026, [url](#)

- [109](#)

BBC News, Fears of a massacre in this city on the front line of Sudan's war, 8 July 2026, [url](#)

- [110](#)

UN News, Armed drones leading cause of civilian death in Sudan war: UN rights chief, 11 May 2026, [url](#)

- [111](#)

Reuters, RSF renews assault on Sudan's al-Obeid as drones strike capital, witnesses say, 12 August 2026, [url](#)

- [112](#)

Asharq Al-Awsat, Defections Shake Sudan's RSF, Threaten Cohesion of Tasis Alliance, 18 June 2026, [url](#); ACLED, How is RSF infighting reshaping the war in Sudan?, 18 May 2026, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Defections Hit Sudan's RSF ... Has the Breakup Phase Begun?, 13 May 2026, [url](#)

- [113](#)

ACLED, How is RSF infighting reshaping the war in Sudan?, 18 May 2026, [url](#)

- [114](#)

LWJ, Sudanese Armed Forces gains in civil war force strategic adjustment from paramilitia rival, 6 August 2026, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, Sudan's RSF turns to tribal leaders to stem losses after Kordofan defeats, 4 August 2026, [url](#)

- [115](#)

LWJ, Sudanese Armed Forces gains in civil war force strategic adjustment from paramilitia rival, 6 August 2026, [url](#)