



Please cite as: EUAA, '[2.1.2. Conflict dynamics and tactics](#)' in *Sudan: Security Situation*, October 2026.

2.1.2. Conflict dynamics and tactics

On 21 March 2025, the SAF achieved a landmark victory by capturing the heavily defended Presidential Palace in downtown Khartoum. The rest of Khartoum city, including neighbourhoods in the east of the city, fell soon afterward.[500](#) At the end of March 2025, the SAF captured the Souk Libya market in Omdurman,[501](#) an RSF logistics hub,[502](#) and RSF admitted retreating from Khartoum city.[503](#) By mid-May 2025, the SAF reportedly had driven the RSF from its remaining positions in Khartoum state,[504](#) including Salha,[505](#) south of Omdurman, and Ombada, west of Omdurman.[506](#) In January 2026, Prime Minister Kamil Idris announced the return of the government to Khartoum.[507](#) Following a period of relative calm,[508](#) RSF drone strikes hit the international airport in Khartoum[509](#) and military installations across the Greater Khartoum area in early May 2026[510](#) and early July 2026.[511](#) In June 2026[512](#) and August 2026,[513](#) RSF drones were intercepted by SAF over Khartoum.[514](#) In connection with the May 2026 attack, Khartoum authorities accused Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) of orchestrating drone strikes on the airport.[515](#)

In April 2026, Human Rights Watch mentioned abuses against men and women detained by the SAF, including in Khartoum.[516](#) In July 2026, authorities launched a security operation in response to growing public concern over neighbourhood insecurity, theft, and illicit drug activity in several areas.[517](#)

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