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2.7.2. Conflict dynamics and tactics

After the SAF had driven the RSF out of Khartoum in March 2025⁸³⁴ and the RSF had taken control of El Fasher in Darfur in October of that same year, the focus of the fighting shifted to Kordofan,⁸³⁵ the region being a strategic crossroads for both conflict parties⁸³⁶ linking Darfur and central Sudan.⁸³⁷ From June 2025 onwards, the RSF moved to encircle the state capital El Obeid,⁸³⁸ mobilising troops in the vicinity in October 2025 indicating preparations for a siege. The RSF had previously imposed a siege on the city between May 2023 and February 2025.⁸³⁹

Clashes between the two warring parties were reported around El Obeid, for example to the west in Umm Sumaima in July⁸⁴⁰ and August 2025,⁸⁴¹ to the south around Kazgil between September 2025⁸⁴² and November 2025,⁸⁴³ and to the north around the town Bara, which changed control several times⁸⁴⁴ until the SAF recaptured the locality at the end of July 2026.⁸⁴⁵ The RSF employed drones to strike areas under SAF control, repeatedly targeting El Obeid,⁸⁴⁶ killing civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure.⁸⁴⁷ Meanwhile, there were reports of SAF airstrikes on RSF positions in the state⁸⁴⁸, some of which reportedly caused civilian fatalities.⁸⁴⁹ As of July 2026, the region around El Obeid remained fiercely contested and was characterised by shifting frontlines, while RSF tactics mirrored their previous methods employed in El Fasher in North Darfur, including siege warfare and pressure on the local civilian population through constant bombardment and destruction of civilian infrastructure.⁸⁵⁰ At the end of July 2026, in a major offensive, the SAF and allied groups such as the SSF managed to recapture towns and villages along the highway connecting El Obeid and Khartoum, managing to retake Jabra El Sheikh, Umm Girfa, and Bara.⁸⁵¹ The offensive reopened the SAF supply corridor linking El Obeid and Omdurman.⁸⁵²

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