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Introduction

This Country of Origin Information (COI) Report was drawn up on the basis of the points for attention mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToR) compiled by the Ministry of Asylum and Migration. The ToR for this COI Report were adopted on 7 April 2025. These ToR, together with the COI Report, are available on the website of the Dutch Government.

This COI Report describes the situation in Sudan insofar as it is relevant for the assessment of asylum applications from persons originating from this country and for decision-making regarding the return of rejected Sudanese asylum seekers. It is an update of the General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan of May 2024. The reporting period is from May 2024 to 28 November 2025. At the time of writing, Sudan was in the midst of war. Many of the developments described have not yet crystallised.

This report does not claim to provide an exhaustive list of individual security incidents and human rights violations. The incidents specifically reported are cited for the purpose of substantiating and illustrating a more general view.

This report is a factual, neutral and objective representation of the findings that were made during the period under consideration. It is not a policy document, nor does it reflect the Dutch government's vision or policy in relation to any given country or region. The report does not contain any conclusions concerning immigration policy.

This COI Report has been compiled on the basis of public and confidential sources, using carefully selected, analysed and verified information. In the compilation of this report, use was made of information from various United Nations (UN) organisations, reports from the European Country of Origin Information (COI) organisations, specialist literature, media reporting and information from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The content in this COI Report is based on multiple sources, except where the facts are generally undisputed or when stated otherwise. The text represents a synthesis of sources. Where quantifications are provided, they can be traced back to the sources. The public sources that were consulted are listed in Chapter 13 of this COI Report.

Some of the information used was obtained during a fact-finding mission (FFM) to Nairobi (Kenya) and Kampala (Uganda) that took place in late June and early July 2025. In addition, some of the information used was sourced from the Netherlands' diplomatic mission in Khartoum,[1] as well as from confidential discussions and correspondence beyond the immediate context of the FFM. The information gleaned in this way was mainly used to support and augment passages based on publicly available information. Each of these sources is marked as a 'confidential source' in the footnotes and accompanied by a date.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the composition and size of Sudan's population, along with a brief interpretation of the country's historical and political context. The chapter further provides a discussion of the political developments that occurred during the reporting period, the various peace initiatives that were

[1] Due to the poor security situation in Sudan, staff at the Dutch embassy in Khartoum were dispersed between The Hague, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Nairobi.

undertaken and the geopolitical context. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the conflict. It discusses the most important conflict parties and then explains the course of the conflict in the different conflict areas and areas of control. Chapter 3 considers the scale and intensity of the violence in more detail, based on quantitative conflict data. Chapter 4 examines the issuance of identity documents, entries in the civil registry, marriage registration and document fraud. Chapter 5 describes the overall human rights situation in the country and deals with arrests, detentions, instances of ill-treatment and torture and the situation of specific groups, such as those of aid workers, journalists and social media users. This chapter also details the relationships and interactions between different population groups and the situation of religious minorities, in particular that of Christians. Chapter 6 considers compulsory military service, mobilisation and recruitment/forced recruitment and the use of child soldiers. Chapter 7 describes the humanitarian situation in the country, in particular the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the cholera outbreak, the food crisis, humanitarian aid and the obstruction of aid and the collapsed health sector. It also looks at the situation of foreign (non-Sudanese) refugees in Sudan, in particular South Sudanese, Ethiopians and Eritreans. Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 describe the situation of women, LGBTIQ+ persons, unaccompanied minors and Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries, namely Egypt, Kenya, Chad and Uganda. Chapter 12 deals with the voluntary return of Sudanese from Egypt to Sudan, the conditions upon return to Sudan and the monitoring of the Sudanese diaspora. Chapter 13 contains a list of abbreviations, foreign terms and a bibliography. Finally, Chapter 14 consists of three maps.

Terms from Arabic have not been transliterated into Latin script in a uniform manner. It has been decided to use the most common variant in the consulted literature for each term. Alternative spellings are listed in the footnotes.

In the description of violent incidents, the available news reports have been used to specify the numbers of victims. If a news report makes an explicit distinction between civilians and combatants killed, this distinction has been adopted. If a description in the COI Report only refers to ‘dead’ and/or ‘injured’, it may be assumed that the underlying news report makes no mention of whether the victims mentioned were civilians or combatants.

1 Country information and political developments

1.1 Introduction to the population of Sudan

Sudan lies in north-eastern Africa and is home to a diverse population. The majority of the Sudanese population consists of various groups identifying themselves as 'Arab'. The remainder are variously described in the literature and media reports as 'African', 'Afro-Sudanese', 'indigenous', 'non-Arab' or 'Black'.[2] This COI Report consistently uses the term 'African'. In Sudan, being Arab is regarded as the norm. The Arab elite predominately originates from the Nile Valley in northern Sudan. Other areas of the country, such as the western Darfur region, are also populated by Arab groups, such as the Rizeigat, Misseriya, Kababish and Habbaniya.[3]

For various reasons, the classifications 'African' and 'Arab' are relative and the distinction between the two population groups is diffuse. Historically, African population groups engaged in arable farming, while Arab population groups lived from nomadic livestock farming.[4]

This COI Report in no way pretends to provide any objective and verifiable determination of whether a population group or individual is 'African' or 'Arab'. When the COI Report refers to 'Arab' or 'African' population groups, it is referring to groups that identify themselves as such or are identified as such.

Darfur constitutes a multi-ethnic patchwork of African and Arabic population groups.[5] The Fur,[6] Masalit and Zaghawa are the three African population groups in Darfur that are most often mentioned in the literature and media reports.[7] All of them speak Nilo-Saharan languages.[8] Given that *Darfur* literally means 'Land of the Fur', some Fur regard themselves as the 'original' inhabitants of this region.[9]

For more background information about the composition of the Sudanese population, the reader is referred to the preceding COI Report.[10] Section 5.10 describes which criteria and perceptions have been used by civilians and armed actors to establish a person's (supposed) ethnicity and regional background.

Section 14.1 shows an ethnolinguistic map of Sudan and South Sudan.

[2] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 9.
[3] Arita Baaijens, *Woestijnnomaden, Trektocht door Sudan,* published in 2003, pp. 77 and 78. Daoud Hari, *De tolk, Mijn verhaal van Darfur,* published in 2008, p. 201. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 40. Andrea Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis, Making refugees in the Chad-Sudan borderlands,* published in 2024, p. 137. Radio Dabanga, *On World Day of Indigenous Peoples, Sudanese struggle between margins and massacres,* 9 August 2025.
[4] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 9. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 3-5, 14, 15, 50 and 51.
[5] Baaijens, *Woestijnnomaden,* published in 2003, pp. 44-45. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 9.
[6] Also referred to as 'Furawi'.
[7] Hari, *De tolk,* published in 2008, p. 80. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 49.
[8] James S. Olson, *The peoples of Africa, An ethnohistorical dictionary,* published in 1996, pp. 183, 375, 608 and 609. Barbara F. Grimes (red.), *Ethnologue, Volume 1, Languages of the world,* published in 2000, pp. 221, 224, 228 and 229.
[9] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 10.
[10] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 9 and 10.

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC),[11] in October 2024 there were 47,528,425 people living in Sudan.[12] The table below provides an overview of the number of inhabitants in each state. Abyei is missing from this overview. The IPC did not list population figures for this border region, which is disputed by Sudan and South Sudan (see subsection 2.5.12 for more information on the security situation and conflict dynamics in Abyei). The following figures are solely intended to provide an indication of the population size of each state.

Number of inhabitants per state (October 2024)

State	Number of inhabitants
El Gezira[13]	5,439,140
Blue Nile	1,470,448
Central Darfur	1,998,753
East Darfur	1,772,902
Gedaref	3,146,052
Kassala	3,035,321
Khartoum	5,190,110
North Darfur	2,770,811
North Kordofan	2,300,592
Northern State[14]	1,430,815
Red Sea	1,809,643
River Nile	2,368,732
Sennar[15]	2,676,891
South Darfur	3,661,757
South Kordofan	2,098,395
West Darfur[16]	1,301,489
West Kordofan	1,823,319
White Nile	3,233,255
Total	**47,528,425**

Source: IPC.

1.2 Historical background

Sudan became independent in 1956. Since then, the army has almost continuously played a leading role in its government and economy. In 1989, Omar al-Bashir (hereinafter: Bashir)[17] seized power. His ruling party was of Islamist persuasion and was known as the National Congress Party (NCP).[18] In 2011, South Sudan seceded following years of conflict. In April 2019, after thirty years, Bashir's rule came to an end. This was preceded by mass demonstrations by pro-democracy demonstrators who had united in so-called 'resistance committees'.[19]

[11] The IPC is an authoritative source on food insecurity and famine and is headquartered in Rome. See https://www.ipcinfo.org for more information on the IPC.
[12] IPC, *The IPC Population Tracking Tool, Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity*, October 2024, accessed on 17 August 2025.
[13] Also spelt 'Aj Jazirah'.
[14] Known in Arabic as *Ash-Shamaliyah.*
[15] Also spelt 'Sinnar'.
[16] Known in Arabic as *Gharb-Darfur*.
[17] Also spelt 'el-Béchir'.
[18] In Arabic, the NCP was known as *al-motamr al-watani.*
[19] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 11, 12 and 16. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 265. Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant (NRC), *Wie houden de oorlog in Soedan gaande en met welk motief?,* 14 November 2025. Sudan War Monitor (SWM), *Introductory*

Following Bashir's fall, a civilian-military transitional government took over, with Abdalla Hamdok as prime minister. In October 2021, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (hereinafter: Burhan), the commander-in-chief of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), assumed power. Burhan held the chairmanship of the Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC), which he was supposed to transfer to a civilian. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as 'Hemedti', became the vice-chairman of the TSC. Hemedti was head of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF),[20] a paramilitary force.[21]

There were tensions and mistrust between the Burhan-led SAF and Hemedti's RSF. For example, they disagreed on how the SAF and the RSF should merge to create a unified professional army. In April 2023, antagonisms between the SAF and the RSF degenerated into armed conflict. Fighting broke out in the capital, Khartoum, and then spread to other parts of Sudan, in particular Darfur.[22]

As a consequence of the heavy fighting in Khartoum, the SAF moved its headquarters to Port Sudan. This Red Sea port also became the seat of the TSC, the SAF-affiliated government.[23] During the current reporting period, the SAF brought the whole of Khartoum under its control (see 2.5.7). On 26 August 2025, the cabinet met in Khartoum for the first time since the outbreak of the war in April 2023. The meeting was chaired by the new prime minister, Kamil Idris (see 1.3.3).[24] In this COI Report, the term '(Sudanese) authorities' refers to the government based in Port Sudan/Khartoum.

The reader is referred to the preceding COI Report for more background information on the origins of the conflict.[25] At the time of writing, the war is continuing. The conflict had consequences for the security, human rights and humanitarian situation in the country. Further details on this are provided in the following chapters. The rest of this chapter describes the developments in domestic politics and the geopolitical balance of power during the reporting period.

1.3 Political developments at the domestic level

1.3.1 Tagadom split

In October 2023, Sudanese civilian groups in the diaspora in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, set up a coalition called *Tagadom* ('Progress').[26] This civilian front was led by former prime minister Hamdok (see 1.2) and sought a peaceful and

guide to Sudan's war, Who, what, where and why, 14 November 2025. Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), *Der ignorierte Krieg,* 20 November 2025.
[20] The RSF are known in Arabic as *Quwat al-Da'm al-Sari*. The RSF has its own website: https://rapidsupportforce.com/en.
[21] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 12 and 13. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 265. The Continent, *The war about everything in Sudan,* 16 August 2025, p. 16. Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), *The forgotten war in Sudan,* 7 November 2025. The Economist, *Hemedti: warlord, power-broker and the new sultan of Darfur,* 7 November 2025. SWM, *Introductory guide to Sudan's war,* 14 November 2025. SZ, *Der ignorierte Krieg,* 20 November 2025.
[22] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 14. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 265 and 266. The Continent, *The war about everything in Sudan,* 16 August 2025, p. 16. CFR, *The forgotten war in Sudan,* 7 November 2025. The Economist, *Hemedti,* 7 November 2025. NRC, *Wie houden de oorlog in Soedan gaande en met welk motief?,* 14 November 2025. SWM, *Introductory guide to Sudan's war,* 14 November 2025. SZ, *Der ignorierte Krieg,* 20 November 2025.
[23] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 19 and 29.
[24] Radio Dabanga, *UN Secretary-General calls Sudan PM Idris – Cabinet meets in Khartoum,* 27 August 2025. Radio Tamazuj, *Sudanese cabinet holds first meeting in Khartoum since war began*, 27 August 2025.
[25] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 11-14.
[26] Also spelt *Taqaddum*.

inclusive solution to the conflict between the SAF and RSF. It also hoped to breathe new life into the democratisation process in Sudan following the end of the war.[27]

Critics accused Tagadom of a lack of inclusion. Many resistance committees (see 1.2), trade unions and youth and women's groups did not feel represented by this coalition.[28] Moreover, at least among critics, the perception existed that Tagadom was under the influence of the RSF. This was due in part to the fact that in January 2024, Hamdok and Hemedti had signed a declaration in Addis Ababa.[29] For its part, Tagadom emphasised its neutrality.[30]

On 10 February 2025, Tagadom split into two factions, *Taasis* ('Foundation')[31] and *Somoud* ('Resilience' or 'Steadfastness').[32] Taasis supported the idea of proclaiming a parallel government that was dominated by the RSF (see 1.3.2). Somoud, by contrast, continued to adhere to the principles of non-violence and neutrality. This faction did not wish to align itself with one of the warring parties and was led by Hamdok.[33]

1.3.2 Parallel government

In February 2025, Taasis met in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital, for the signing of a charter. In the charter, the coalition, which consisted of six armed factions,[34] set out the outlines of an alternative government led by the RSF. On 15 April 2025, two years after the outbreak of the war, the RSF actually proclaimed a parallel government. The stated aim of this so-called 'Government of Peace and Unity' was a secular and decentralised state. It also presented itself as an advocate of the peripheral areas which had, in the past, been marginalised by the central government in Khartoum, such as Darfur and Kordofan.[35]

The fact that the founding meeting of Taasis took place in Nairobi had consequences for the bilateral relations between the Sudanese authorities and Kenya, as is discussed in subsection 1.6.4.

[27] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 16.
[28] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 16.
[29] The Addis Ababa Declaration set out various undertakings. For example, Hemedti expressed his willingness to conclude a ceasefire with the SAF. He also stated his intention to assist with the return of millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In addition, Hemedti pledged the release of 451 prisoners. The RSF also expressed its willingness to create corridors in their areas of control for the purposes of humanitarian assistance.
[30] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 18 and 19. Confidential source, 10 April 2025.
[31] Also spelt as *Tasis*, *Tassis* and *Tasees*. Known in English as the Sudan Founding Alliance (SFA).
[32] Also spelt *Sumoud* and *Sumud*. In English, this coalition is also known as the Civil Democratic Alliance (CDA) of Revolutionary Forces.
[33] SWM, *Taqaddum splits over government-in-exile proposal,* 12 February 2025. Al Jazeera, *After splinter, can Sudan's anti-war coalition reinvent itself?,* 20 February 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[34] The six armed factions were Hemedti's RSF, Abdelaziz Al Hilu's Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), Al-Hadi Idris's Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council (SLM-TC), Al-Tahir Hajar's Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces (GSLF), Hafez Abdel Nabi's Sudanese Alliance Forces and a splinter of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Suleiman Sandal. Ayin Network, *RSF's military alliances reshape the map of Sudan's war,* 21 March 2025. Darfur24, *Hajar movement commander confirms fighting alongside RSF,* 20 November 2025. Darfur24, *Transitional Council commander threatens to advance on remaining areas of North Darfur,* 24 November 2025.
[35] Confidential source, 21 February 2025. Al Jazeera, *Sudan's RSF, accused of genocide, signs charter to form rival government,* 23 February 2025. Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Al Jazeera, *Sudan paramilitary declares rival government two years into civil war,* 15 April 2025. Dutch Broadcasting Foundation (NOS), *RSF roept eigen regering uit: 'Vrede lijkt verder weg dan ooit',* 16 April 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025.

In July 2025, RSF leader Hemedti was named chairman of the parallel government and Abdelaziz Al Hilu vice-chairman.[36] Al Hilu led the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).[37] The SPLM-N/Al Hilu described itself as championing the Nuba, a collection of African population groups. The SPLM-N operated in the Nuba mountains, situated in the southern state of South Kordofan. It had been waging an armed struggle against the central government in Khartoum since 2011.[38] The long-standing aspiration of the SPLM-N of self-governance for the Nuba and a secular state was in line with the basic principles formulated by Taasis.[39]

On 27 July 2025, the Taasis coalition chose Nyala, the capital of South Darfur and an RSF stronghold, as its administrative centre.[40] On 30 August 2025, the parallel government under Hemedti was sworn in in Nyala.[41] A day later, it met for the first time in the same city. The meeting was chaired by Hemedti.[42]

Various multilateral organisations rejected the establishment of a parallel government in Sudan. On 27 July 2025, the Arab League[43] issued a statement condemning the move.[44] On 4 August 2025, the African Union (AU) condemned the establishment of a parallel government in Sudan. It also expressed its concern about the humanitarian situation in the country and called on the warring parties to cease all hostilities, in particular the siege of El Fasher (see 2.5.8)[45]. The AU also condemned any form of foreign interference in the conflict.[46] On 13 August 2025, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) also dismissed the establishment of a parallel government in Sudan. According to the UNSC, the move represented a threat to the territorial integrity of the country and threatened to exacerbate the violence and the humanitarian situation.[47] At the time of writing, no country had recognised the alternative government in Nyala.[48]

1.3.3 New prime minister

On 19 May 2025 Burhan, the chairman of the TSC (see 1.2), named Kamil Idris prime minister. This put Idris, a former UN official, at the head of the executive. As prime minister, he was not part of the TSC. On the same day, Burhan appointed two women to the TSC. They were to represent eastern and central Sudan within the council.[49] Idris took upon himself the task of setting up a 'Government of Hope', known in Arabic as *Amal*.[50]

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[36] Darfur24, *Tasis picks Hemeti as Chairman of the Leadership Council,* 1 July 2025. Radio Tamazuj, *RSF's Hemetti to lead new alliance,* 2 July 2025. Sudans Post, *Tasis Alliance announces leadership with Hemedti at the helm,* 2 July 2025. Sudans Post, *RSF and allies form parallel gov't under Hemedti to challenge army rule,* 26 July 2025. SWM, *Hemedti named president of RSF-led presidential council,* 27 July 2025.
[37] The SPLM-N is known in Arabic as *Al-Harakat al-Sha'abia li-Tahrir al-Sudan al-Shamal*.
[38] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 12 and 28.
[39] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[40] Darfur24, *Thousands rally in Nyala to support RSF's parallel government,* 3 August 2025.
[41] Darfur24, *Members of TASIS Presidential Council take oath of office in Nyala, South Darfur,* 30 August 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's parallel government sworn in, unveils altered national emblem,* 30 August 2025.
[42] Sudan Tribune, *Dagalo chairs first parallel government meeting in Nyala, appoints prime minister,* 31 August 2025.
[43] Full name: League of Arab States (LAS). See www.lasportal.org/en/Pages/default.aspx for more information on the Arab League.
[44] Sudan News Agency (SUNA), *Arab League condemns formation of parallel government in Sudan,* 27 July 2025.
[45] Also spelt 'Al-Fashir' and 'Al Fashar'.
[46] AU, *Communiqué of the 1293rd meeting of the Peace and Security Council held on 4 August 2025 on update on the situation in Sudan,* 4 August 2025.
[47] UN, *Security Council rejects creation of rival government in Sudan*, 13 August 2025.
[48] Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[49] Al Jazeera, *Sudan's army leader al-Burhan appoints former UN official as prime minister,* 19 May 2025. Sudans Post, *Sudan's Port Sudan authorities to appoint new Prime Minister in major political shift,* 19 May 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's Burhan appoints Kamil Idris as prime minister, two women to Sovereign Council,* 19 May 2025. Confidential source, 2 June 2025. Confidential source, 10 June 2025.
[50] NOS, *Ook met twee regeringen woekert de humanitaire crisis in Sudan voort,* 28 July 2025. Middle East Eye (MEE), *Why Sudanese people are losing faith in the 'government of hope',* 2 August 2025.

Idris's appointment was met with mixed reactions. The AU welcomed the appointment as a first step towards an inclusive and democratic order in Sudan.[51] Taasis, the RSF-led coalition, accused the AU of bias in favour of the SAF.[52] Somoud, the civilian coalition led by former prime minister Hamdok (see 1.3.1), also stated that the positive reaction from the AU legitimised the SAF's position of power.[53]

In response to Burhan's seizure of power in October 2021 (see 1.2), the AU had suspended Sudan's membership. This situation remained unchanged during the reporting period.[54] On 1 October 2025, prime minister Idris asserted that Sudan's readmission to the AU would be 'a matter of time'.[55]

1.4 Peace initiatives

In the preceding reporting period, various peace initiatives took place, none of which led to a peaceful solution to the conflict in Sudan. For instance, Saudi Arabia and the United States (US) initiated a negotiation process between the SAF and the RSF in Jeddah, a Saudi port city on the Red Sea.[56]

In August 2024, the US and Saudi Arabia sponsored peace talks that were held over the course of ten days near Geneva, Switzerland. Diplomats from other countries, such as Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), took part in the talks. The SAF did not send an official delegation to the talks, citing the Emirati presence as a reason. The SAF accused the UAE of supporting the RSF (see 1.6.2). The talks near Geneva did not lead to a ceasefire. However, the Sudanese authorities did agree to permit food aid via the Chadian border town of Adré.[57] Although the authorities did not exercise control over the border region between eastern Chad and Darfur, if aid organisations supplied aid from Chad without the permission of the Sudanese government, they risked being barred from SAF-controlled territory.[58] See section 7.5 for more information on the problematic relations between the warring parties and the aid sector.

On 12 September 2025, the foreign ministers of the US, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE issued a joint statement. The four countries were working together in a group known as the Quad.[59] The group called on the SAF and the RSF to agree to a three-month truce. This would allow the humanitarian aid effort in Sudan to get underway. After that, the country would go through a nine-month transition phase leading up to independent civilian rule.[60]

[51] AU, *The Chairperson of the African Union Commission welcomes appointment of civilian Prime Minister in Sudan,* 20 May 2025. Confidential source, 29 August 2025.
[52] Radio Dabanga, *AU's support for new Sudan PM sparks uproar among political and armed groups,* 22 May 2025.
[53] Radio Dabanga, *Hamdok's 'Sumoud' condemns AU endorsement of newly appointed Sudan PM,* 23 May 2025.
[54] Sudan Tribune, *African Union rejects Sudan's parallel government, holds firm on suspension,* 4 August 2025. Confidential source, 29 August 2025.
[55] Darfur24, *Kamil Idris: Sudan's return to the African Union is imminent,* 2 October 2025.
[56] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 15 and 16.
[57] Confidential source, 16 August 2024. Al Jazeera, *Aid will enter Sudan by two routes, mediators say,* 23 August 2024. New York Times, *Peace talks at Swiss resort beckoned, Sudan's divided general wouldn't go,* 23 August 2024. NRC, *Vredesoverleg levert weinig op,* 27 August 2024. Confidential source, 9 September 2024.
[58] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2025, p. 75.
[59] 'Quad' stood for 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue' or 'Quadrilateral Mechanism'. The Quad initiative was also known as the 'Quartet '.
[60] Al Arabiya, *US, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE call for three-month truce in Sudan,* 12 September 2025. Moatinoon, *Quartet pushes for Sudan truce as 9-month transition looms,* 12 September 2025. Radio Tamazuj, *U.S., Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt propose roadmap for peace in Sudan,* 12 September 2025. United States Department of State (USDoS), *Joint statement on restoring peace and security in Sudan,* 12 September 2025. Darfur24, *'Quartet' proposes ceasefire and transitional process in Sudan,* 13 September 2025.

Various interested parties, including the Somoud civilian coalition (see 1.3.1) and the human rights group Emergency Lawyers,[61] responded positively to the joint declaration. The AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)[62] and the UN also welcomed the proposal.[63]

At the time of writing, negotiations on a ceasefire were still ongoing.[64]

1.5 Sudan and the UN

In the preceding reporting period, it was difficult for the UN to play a mediating role in the conflict in Sudan.[65] This situation remained the same during the reporting period.

In September 2024, a fact-finding mission (FFM) of the UN Human Rights Council presented its findings on the conflict in Sudan. Based on interviews with 182 individuals, it concluded that a culture of impunity prevailed in Sudan. The same FFM recommended that the UNSC impose an arms embargo for the whole of the Sudan[66] and form a peacekeeping force with the goal of protecting the Sudanese civilian population.[67] The Sudanese authorities rejected the recommendation concerning a peace-keeping force and described the UN Human Rights Council as a 'political and illegal body'.[68]

On 18 November 2024, the UNSC voted on a resolution drawn up by the United Kingdom (UK) and Sierra Leone. The UN resolution called on the SAF and the RSF to agree to a truce and to honour the agreements made in Jeddah, such as protecting the civilian population and allowing safe passage for humanitarian aid. Fourteen countries of the UNSC supported the proposal, but the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) exercised its veto. Russia described the resolution as a 'demonstration of neo-colonialism' and stated that it was exercising its veto in order to respect Sudan's sovereignty.[69] Subsection 1.6.8 provides more detail on how Russia positioned itself with regard to Sudan.

During the preceding reporting period, the SAF called on the international community to designate the RSF as a 'terrorist organisation'.[70] On 25 September 2025, prime minister Idris repeated this call during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.[71]

[61] Emergency Lawyers were officially founded in February 2019 with the aim of providing legal advice to victims of state repression. In Arabic, this group is known as *Mouhamou Eltawarie*. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[62] The IGAD has eight member states: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. See https://igad.int for more information on IGAD.
[63] Sudan Tribune, *Political, human rights and union forces welcome 'Quartet' commitments to end Sudan war,* 13 September 2025. Sudan Tribune, *AU, IGAD welcome Quad's Sudan peace plan amid government scepticism,* 14 September 2025. Darfur24, *AU, IGAD welcome quartet proposal to end Sudan war,* 15 September 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Quartet statement and Sudanese aspirations for peace to end suffering,* 16 September 2025. Darfur24, *UN official backs Quartet push for humanitarian truce in Sudan,* 18 September 2025. Darfur24, *"Sumud" proposes preparatory committee to launch political process in Sudan,* 17 October 2025.
[64] Confidential source, 27 November 2025.
[65] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 20.
[66] At the time of writing, there was an arms embargo in place for Darfur.
[67] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission outlines extensive human rights violations, international crimes, urges protection of civilians,* 6 September 2024. Confidential source, 20 September 2024.
[68] British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *Sudan rejects UN call for peace force to protect civilians,* 8 September 2024. Confidential source, 20 September 2024.
[69] Confidential source, 14 November 2024. Confidential source, 19 November 2024. NOS, *Rusland vetoot VN-resolutie met oproep staakt-het-vuren oorlog Sudan,* 19 November 2024.
[70] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 22.
[71] Radio Tamazuj, *Sudan's prime minister urges UN to designate RSF as terrorist group,* 26 September 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan PM demands UN action from 'existential dangers',* 27 September 2025.

1.6 Geopolitical context

1.6.1 Introduction

The conflict in Sudan was taking place in a complex geopolitical context.[72] This section describes the positions adopted by different countries to the conflict in Sudan and the warring parties. The description is by no means exhaustive and solely considers developments and events which are important to an overall understanding of the geopolitical balance of power.

1.6.2 United Arab Emirates (UAE)

In the preceding reporting period, diplomatic tensions arose between Sudan and the UAE. The Sudanese authorities accused the UAE of supplying arms to the RSF. The Emirati authorities denied providing military support to any conflict party in Sudan.[73]

During the reporting period, the Sudanese authorities repeated the accusation that the UAE was supplying arms to the RSF.[74] Media reports about the alleged arms supplies by the UAE to the RSF also continued during the reporting period. This support allegedly consisted of uniforms, ammunition, transport vehicles, drones and advanced artillery and anti-aircraft systems.[75] The UAE vigorously denied supplying arms to the RSF and described the Sudanese accusations as 'unfounded', 'untrue' and 'disinformation'.[76]

Sudan instituted legal proceedings against the UAE before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ is the highest court of the UN and considers disputes between states.[77] According to Sudan, by supporting the RSF, the UAE were guilty of genocide against the African population groups in Darfur, in particular the Masalit in West Darfur. The UAE described the action as a 'cynical publicity stunt' and claimed that the Sudanese authorities were using it to distract attention from the abuses committed by the SAF. On 5 May 2025, the ICJ rejected the case. Although Sudan and the UAE had both signed the genocide treaty of 1948, the UAE had made a reservation regarding Article 9 of the treaty. This stipulated that other states could

[72] Confidential source, 19 June 2025. The EastAfrican, *Sudan war ropes in each of its neighbours,* 21 June 2025. Sudan Tribune, *How regional powers obstruct peace in Sudan,* 4 August 2025. De Morgen, *Hoe de wereld bijdraagt aan de vergeten burgeroorlog,* 1 September 2025. Trouw, *In Soedan speelt de wereld een sinister spel om goud, olie en mineralen,* 5 November 2025. NOS, *Wapensmokkel, goud en geopolitiek, De strijd in Sudan is meer dan een burgeroorlog,* 6 November 2025.
[73] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 25 and 26.
[74] Al Jazeera, *Civil war in Sudan takes centre stage at UN,* 19 June 2024. The Independent, *Sudan accuses UAE of fueling war with weapons to paramilitary rivals, UAE calls claim 'ludicrous',* 19 June 2024. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan demands UAE halt interference, support for RSF,* 25 November 2025.
[75] The Guardian, *'Smoking gun' evidence points to UAE involvement in Sudan civil war,* 25 July 2024. The Guardian, *Leaked UN experts report raises fresh concerns over UAE's role in Sudan war,* 14 April 2025. NRC, *Rol Emiraten in Soedan laat strategie van machtspolitiek in Afrika zien*, 18 April 2025. The New York Times, *Conquering soccer and arming warlords,* 29 June 2025. Africa Intelligence, *Behind Bosaso Airport, the UAE's key hub for supplying arms to Sudan,* 1 July 2025. The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), *How U.A.E. arms bolstered a Sudanese militia accused of genocide,* 28 October 2025. MEE, *Exclusive, Inside the UAE's secret Sudan war operation at Somalia's Bosaso,* 31 October 2025. Financial Times (FT), *Sudan civil war atrocities cast spotlight on UAE,* 4 November 2025. Sudan Research, Analysis and Advocacy, *How we know the UAE continues to supply the RSF*, 9 November 2025. NRC, *Wie houden de oorlog in Soedan gaande en met welk motief?,* 14 November 2025.
[76] UNSC, *Letter dated 26 June 2024 from the Chargée d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council,* 27 June 2024. UNSC, *Letter dated 21 September 2024 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council,* 23 September 2024. UNSC, *Letter dated 20 November 2024 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council,* 21 November 2024. Darfur24, *UAE describes Sudan's accusations as "false allegations",* 6 August 2025.
[77] The seat of the court is the Peace Palace in The Hague. See https://www.vredespaleis.nl/gerechtshoven/internationaal-gerechtshof/ for more information on the ICJ.

not sue the UAE for genocide. As a result, the court had no jurisdiction to rule on this case.[78]

On 6 May 2025, Sudan announced that it was severing diplomatic ties with the UAE. This announcement followed the ruling by the ICJ and a series of drone attacks on Port Sudan, about which more details are provided in subsection 2.3.2. At the same time, Sudan recalled its own ambassador from the UAE and described the country as a 'hostile state'. The Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to recognise the decision, asserting that the Sudanese authorities in Port Sudan did not constitute the lawful government of Sudan. According to the Emirati response, the country should properly be administered by a civilian government.[79]

On 4 August 2025, the Sudanese authorities accused the UAE of organising and funding the deployment of Colombian mercenaries on the side of the RSF (see 2.3.1).[80] In response, the Emirati authorities suspended flights between the UAE and Sudan.[81] At the time of writing, according to one source, all air and shipping traffic between the UAE and Sudan had been suspended.[82] On 5 September 2025, Sudan submitted a formal complaint to the UNSC with regard to the supposed involvement of the UAE in the deployment of Colombian mercenaries. The Emirati authorities dismissed the evidence submitted by Sudan as 'fabricated'.[83]

1.6.3 Chad

In the preceding reporting period, bilateral tensions arose between Sudan and Chad. The Sudanese authorities alleged that the UAE were supplying the RSF with arms and munitions via Chadian territory. The Emirati weapons were reportedly flown to Amdjarass[84] airport in eastern Chad, before being transported overland to Darfur, the base of the RSF.[85]

During the reporting period, the tensions between Sudan and Chad escalated. On 23 March 2025, General Yasir Atta, deputy commander of the SAF and member of the TSC (see 1.2), remarked that the Chadian airports at Ndjamena and Amdjarass were 'legitimate military targets' in the view of the SAF. According to Atta, the Emirati arms deliveries for the RSF were flown in via these two airports. The Chadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned Atta's statement and referred to a 'declaration of war' and 'irresponsible statements'.[86]

One source pointed out that significant numbers of Chadian nationals were engaged in the fighting in Sudan, both on the side of the SAF and on the side of the RSF.

[78] BBC, *Top UN court rejects Sudan's bid to sue UAE for genocide,* 5 May 2025. NOS, *Internationaal Gerechtshof wijst genocidezaak Sudan tegen VAE af,* 5 May 2025. The Guardian, *Sudan fails in attempt to make UAE accountable for acts of genocide,* 5 May 2025. The New York Times, *U.N. court drops Sudan's genocide case against U.A.E.,* 5 May 2025.
[79] The Guardian, *Sudan to cut ties with United Arab Emirates over alleged RSF support,* 6 May 2025. Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UAE does not recognize the decision of Port Sudan Authority,* 7 May 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan cuts ties with UAE,* 7 May 2025. The EastAfrican, *Sudan labels UAE 'hostile state', cuts diplomatic ties,* 7 May 2025. Centre for Information Resilience (CIR), *Alleged drone strikes in Port Sudan,* 13 May 2025.
[80] Sudan Today, *Sudan accuses UAE of financing Colombian mercenaries in support of RSF,* 4 August 2025. Le Monde, *Le Soudan accuse les Emirats arabes unis de financer des mercenaires colombiens pour aider les paramilitaires,* 5 August 2025. The Independent, *Sudan accuses the UAE of funding Colombian mercenaries to fight alongside the RSF in civil war,* 5 August 2025.
[81] Radio Dabanga, *UAE suspends Sudan flights as accusations of RSF links continue,* 7 August 2025.
[82] Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[83] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan files UN complaint over alleged UAE-backed Colombian mercenaries in Darfur,* 6 September 2025. Sudan Today, *Sudan accuses UAE of recruiting Colombian mercenaries to support paramilitary groups,* 9 September 2025. FT, *Sudan accuses UAE of sponsoring mercenaries to fight for rebels,* 10 September 2025.
[84] Also spelt 'Am Jars' and 'Am-Djarass'.
[85] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 25 and 26.
[86] BBC, *Chad condemns Sudan's airport threat as 'declaration of war',* 24 March 2025. SWM, *Sudanese general vows military action against Chad,* 27 March 2025.

Prompted by unemployment in Chad, they had offered their services as combatants to the warring parties in Sudan. It was not known how many Chadian nationals were participating in the conflict in Sudan, but the same source had heard of militias in Darfur that consisted largely of Chadian nationals.[87]

1.6.4 Kenya

The RSF-led Taasis coalition met in Nairobi in February 2025 in preparation for the establishment of a parallel government (see 1.3.2). On 20 February 2025, the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press statement in which it blamed Kenya for allowing Taasis to hold its founding conference on Kenyan soil. Sudan referred to this as an 'act of hostility'. The country also condemned Kenyan president William Ruto for receiving Hemedti in January 2024. In response, Kenya stated that it only wanted to offer a platform for peace talks and initiatives.[88]

Sudan subsequently recalled its ambassador from Kenya and on 13 March 2025, the Sudanese Ministry of Trade suspended imports of all Kenyan products with immediate effect, including tea.[89] The import ban was in force at the time of writing.[90]

1.6.5 Libya

During the preceding reporting period, the RSF were already maintaining links with field marshal Khalifa Haftar, a warlord who controlled the eastern part of Libya. His collection of armed groups was variously known as the Libyan National Army (LNA) or the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF).[91] This COI Report consistently uses the abbreviation 'LAAF'.

In late 2024, a group of UN experts determined that various LAAF units had permitted logistical resources, such as all-terrain vehicles and fuel, to be transported to both pro-RSF and pro-SAF militias.[92] In November 2025, *The Sentry* published an investigation report[93] which alleged that Haftar was supplying fuel to the RSF at the request of the UAE.[94]

On 7 June 2025 an armed encounter took place in the Libya-Sudan border area between a Libyan battalion affiliated with the LAAF[95] and the Joint Force, a Darfuri armed group affiliated with the SAF (see 2.4).[96] Several combatants were killed and the Libyan battalion captured one fighter of the Joint Force, who was held as a prisoner of war.[97] The SAF held Haftar responsible for the incident and referred to an act of 'aggression against Sudan'. The SAF also asserted that Haftar was supported in his actions by the UAE.[98] Libyan troops under Haftar allegedly also

[87] Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[88] The EastAfrican, *Ruto's game of chance in solving Sudan crisis,* 19 February 2025. Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Press statement, 25/23*, 20 February 2025.
[89] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan bans Kenyan imports over support for paramilitary force,* 13 March 2025. BBC, *Sudan bans all imports from Kenya after it hosted civil war rivals*, 14 March 2025.
[90] Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[91] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 26 and 27.
[92] UNSC, *Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) concerning Libya,* 13 December 2024, pp. 9, 11 and 86.
[93] *The Sentry* is based in Washington D.C. and conducts investigations into transnational financial malpractice and crimes against humanity. See https://thesentry.org for more information on this media organisation.
[94] The Sentry, *Inside job, Libya's fuel smuggling escalation,* November 2025, pp. 27 and 28.
[95] The battalion involved was the *Subul al-Salam Battalion* (also spelt *Sabil al-Salam* and *Sabal al-Salam*).
[96] The precise location of the fighting was in the Jebel Uweinat area, also spelt 'Jebel al-Uwaynat'.
[97] Darfur24, *Libyan Army clashes with Joint Forces on the Sudan-Libya border,* 7 June 2025.
[98] Al Jazeera, *Sudanese army accuses Libya's Haftar joint border attack with RSF,* 10 June 2025. Darfur24, *SAF: Khalifa Haftar's Libyan forces attacked our border garrison,* 10 June 2025. MEE, *Sudanese army accuses Libya's*

assisted the RSF in its capture of the tripoint between Libya, Sudan and Egypt,[99] more details of which are provided in subsection 2.5.11.

In late July 2025, the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR)[100] published an article revealing that the RSF had a military base in south-eastern Libya, close to the border with Sudan and Egypt. The CIR had analysed hundreds of video clips on social media and satellite images. Based on that analysis, the research centre came to the conclusion that the RSF's camp in the Libyan desert numbered hundreds of vehicles and that the fighters present were wearing RSF shoulder patches. Some of those vehicles later surfaced in videos at other locations, for example in North Darfur.[101]

1.6.6 South Sudan

In the preceding reporting period, bilateral relations between Sudan and South Sudan were relatively good.[102] During the current reporting period, those relations came under strain.[103]

When, during the preceding reporting period, the SAF made territorial gains in Omdurman,[104] it came to light that there were South Sudanese mercenaries serving in the ranks of the RSF.[105] Among the SAF and their affiliated militias, the perception arose that the RSF were receiving support from South Sudan. According to SAF general Atta, 65% of the RSF force consisted of South Sudanese.[106]

In January 2025, the SAF and their affiliated militias recaptured Wad Madani,[107] the capital of the central Sudanese state of El Gezira. In the aftermath of its victory, the SAF and affiliated militias targeted South Sudanese civilians (see 2.5.4). In response, Ramadan Goc, the South Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs asked the UNSC to launch an investigation into the killings of South Sudanese in Sudan. The Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed this call as 'a call for foreign intervention in Sudan's internal affairs'.[108]

During the reporting period, the armed conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan threatened to become entangled with one another. In South Sudan, violence broke out between the South Sudan government army[109] of president Salva Kiir and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO)[110] of Riek Machar. The SPLM-IO was a South Sudanese opposition group that enjoyed support mainly among the Nuer.[111] In March 2025, a two-day clash took place between the RSF and the SPLM-IO in the border region between Sudan and South Sudan.[112] Media reports

Haftar of joint border attack with RSF, 11 June 2025. Sudans Post, *Port Sudan blames Haftar militia for RSF border assault,* 11 June 2025.
[99] MEE, *UAE and Haftar behind RSF capture of Sudan's triangle border region,* 12 August 2025.
[100] The CIR conducts digital research into human rights violations and war crimes worldwide, in particular in Myanmar (formerly 'Burma'), Ukraine and Sudan. With respect to Sudan, the CIR has a specific project called *Sudan Witness*. See https://www.info-res.org/sudan-witness/ for more information.
[101] CIR, *How we found an RSF military camp in the Libyan desert,* 31 July 2025.
[102] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 17.
[103] SWM, *Greater Sudan and the risk of regional war,* 12 March 2025.
[104] Also known as the 'twin city of Khartoum'. Omdurman is part of 'Greater Khartoum'.
[105] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 17.
[106] SWM, *Unfolding diplomatic tensions between Sudan and South Sudan,* 27 January 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan, South Sudan diplomatic crisis escalates over violence against nationals,* 5 February 2025.
[107] Known as 'Madani' for short in the Sudanese vernacular.
[108] SWM, *Unfolding diplomatic tensions between Sudan and South Sudan,* 27 January 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan, South Sudan diplomatic crisis escalates over violence against nationals,* 5 February 2025.
[109] The South Sudanese armed forces are known as the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF).
[110] The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Government (SPLM-IG) is the governing party of South Sudan and draws its support primarily from the Dinka, a population group that speaks a Nilo-Saharan language.
[111] This population group speaks a Nilo-Saharan language.
[112] The engagement took place near the border between the Sudanese state of Blue Nile and the South Sudanese state of Upper Nile.

did not reveal how many casualties this had resulted in. According to diplomatic sources, the RSF and the SPLM-IO were supported by South Sudan and Sudan, respectively. This was not the first time the two countries had conducted a proxy war against one another. In the past, Sudan had also supported South Sudanese rebels, and vice versa.[113]

In early September 2025, it was reported in the media that arms supplies from the UAE, destined for the RSF, were being flown via South Sudanese airspace to Chad, among other destinations (see subsection 1.6.3 for more information on the alleged air bridge from the UAE to Chad).[114]

1.6.7 Iran

In 2016, Sudan and Iran broke off diplomatic relations, but during the reporting period these were restored in full. In July 2024, Port Sudan and Tehran exchanged ambassadors.[115] When Israel carried out air attacks on Iran in June 2025, Sudan condemned the attacks.[116]

As part of the rapprochement between Iran and Sudan, Iran supplied weapons to Sudan via an air bridge, including Mohajer-6 drones. According to Conflict Observatory, a research consortium that was funded by the US State Department, between December 2023 and July 2024, Sudan received at least nine Iranian cargo flights of military equipment.[117]

See subsection 2.2.2 for more information on the deployment of Iranian-made drones.

1.6.8 Russia

During the reporting period, Russia revised its position towards the conflict parties in Sudan. In the preceding reporting period, the RSF received arms support from the Wagner Group, a Russian mercenary force which is now known as the 'African Corps'. In return, the RSF exported Sudanese gold to Russia.[118]

Following the death of Yevgeny Prigozhin, the former commander of the Wagner group,[119] Russia sought a rapprochement with the Sudanese authorities. For example, in November 2024, Russia vetoed a UN resolution in the UNSC, an action that was in the interest of the Sudanese authorities (see 1.5). In Moscow in February 2025, Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ali Youssef Ahmed al-Sharif, the Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, agreed that Russia could open a naval base on Sudan's Red Sea coast.[120] In early 2025, a series

[113] SWM, *Sudan's RSF clashes with South Sudan's SPLA-IO,* 18 March 2025. NRC, *De oorlog in Soedan heeft desastreuze effecten: deze maand zijn conflicten en chaos overgeslagen op buurlanden,* 23 March 2025. Al Jazeera, *Is Sudan's war merging with South Sudanese conflicts?,* 29 March 2025.
[114] Africa Intelligence, *Salva Kiir's difficult balancing act on the Sudanese border,* 4 September 2025.
[115] Al Jazeera, *Iran, Sudan Exchange ambassadors after eight years,* 21 July 2024. SWM, *The Iran-Sudan rapprochement, What does it mean for the Red Sea?,* 22 July 2024.
[116] Radio Tamazuj, *Sudan condemns Israeli strike on Iran,* 14 June 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan condemns Israeli strike on Iran,* 14 June 2025.
[117] SWM, *Iran's air bridge to the Sudanese military,* 17 October 2024.
[118] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 27.
[119] In the summer of 2023, Prigozhin launched a mutiny, but then broke it off again. He was killed in an aircraft incident in August 2023. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematic Country of Origin Information Report on the Russian Federation, Compulsory military service and mobilisation, LGBTIQ+ people, critics and opponents,* February 2025, pp. 23 and 24.
[120] Radio Dabanga, *Sudan general confirms Red Sea base deal with Russia, strengthens ties with Iran,* 29 May 2024. Confidential source, 11 June 2025. BBC, *'No obstacles' to Russian Red Sea base – Sudan*, 13 February 2025. The Guardian, *Sudan says plan for first Russian naval base in Africa will go ahead,* 13 February 2025.

of drone attacks took place on Port Sudan (see 2.3.2), which appeared to disrupt Russian ambitions in the Red Sea.[121]

On 18 September 2025, *Sudan Tribune,* an independent news platform,[122] reported that Russian mercenaries had invaded South Darfur from the Central African Republic (CAR), advancing up to 35 kilometres inside Sudan. The Russians passed through several villages on motorbikes and in all-terrain vehicles and armoured vehicles, firing randomly at houses and farms. At least seven civilians were killed in the attack. The border region between Sudan and CAR was notorious for illegal activities such as arms and drugs smuggling.[123] One source regarded the event as a spill-over from the conflict over control of the gold mines in the CAR.[124] At the time of writing, it appears that this was an isolated incident without further political and military consequences.[125]

[121] The Jamestown Foundation, *Drone attacks on Port Sudan jeopardize plan for Russian Red Sea naval base,* 28 May 2025.
[122] *Sudan Tribune* is based in Paris and is primarily focused on Sudan. See https://sudantribune.com/about-us for more information on *Sudan Tribune*.
[123] Sudan Tribune, *Wagner group accused of deadly incursions into Sudan from CAR,* 18 September 2025.
[124] Confidential source, 11 November 2025.
[125] Confidential source, 12 November 2025. Confidential source, 17 November 2025.

2 Overview of the conflict

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the conflict in Sudan. The first part of this chapter describes the different conflict parties. This description is not exhaustive. The political and military landscape in Sudan was fragmented to such an extent that only the actors that exerted the greatest influence on the security situation can be discussed. This discussion is followed by a brief outline of each party, focusing on its leadership, composition, constituency, any political and/or religious orientation, weaponry used and chosen battle tactics.

The media have generally described the conflict in Sudan as a war 'between two generals', i.e. Burhan of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Hemedti of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). In reality, both sides had a diverse spectrum of militias fighting alongside them. These armed groups operated more or less independently of the SAF or RSF, as the case may be, and sometimes switched sides. Neither the SAF nor the RSF had their allies fully under control,[126] as is made clear in the first half of the chapter.

The second part of this chapter explains how the armed conflict unfolded and which areas were controlled by which actors. The description makes it clear that the warring parties enjoyed fluctuating fortunes, as a result of which the front lines were subject to change. The third chapter catalogues the scale and intensity of the violence in more detail, based on quantitative conflict data.

2.2 SAF and affiliated militias

2.2.1 Profile and composition

Burhan performed a dual role. As chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC), he presented himself as the *de facto* head of state of Sudan. He was also commander-in-chief of the SAF. The Sudanese government army had established its headquarters in Port Sudan (see 1.2). The military leadership was traditionally dominated by the Arab elite from the Nile valley in northern Sudan.[127]

During the reporting period, there were approximately twenty militias fighting on the side of the SAF.[128] It is impossible to describe every pro-SAF militia. This passage therefore focuses on the El Bara Bin Malik Brigade (BBMB)[129] and the Sudan Shield Forces (SSF), two pro-government militias that played an important role in the course of the conflict. In the current reporting period, the BBMB were primarily active in Khartoum (see 2.5.7) and the SSF in El Gezira (see 2.5.4).[130]

[126] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), *Two years of war in Sudan, How the SAF is gaining the upper hand,* 15 April 2025, p. 8. Confidential source, 16 April 2025. Confidential source, 14 May 2025. SZ, *Der ignorierte Krieg,* 20 November 2025.
[127] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 22. SWM, *Introductory guide to Sudan's war,* 14 November 2025.
[128] Ayin Network, *Sudan's army, Islamists, and the Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigade,* 25 March 2025.
[129] Also spelt *Al-Bara Bin Malik Brigade.* This unit was named after El Bara bin Malik, a *sahabi* ('companion') of the prophet Mohammed. El Bara took part in several campaigns of conquest in the seventh century.
[130] Confidential source, 17 November 2025.

The BBMB had already appeared on the scene during the preceding reporting period. This armed group with a jihadi orientation had emerged from the paramilitary structures of the National Congress Party (NCP), the former governing party of the country (see 1.2). The BBMB was commanded by Al Misbah Abu Zeid Talha.[131] During the Bashir government (1989-2019), he worked for the NCP's communications department. In late March 2025, the strength of his militia was estimated at 20,000 men. The fighters of the BBMB were mostly young men from wealthy families. They emphasised their Islamic orientation with a raised index finger to symbolise the indivisibility of Allah. Many fighters also wore yellow headbands.[132] In September 2025, the US imposed sanctions against the BBMB (see 2.6.2).

During the reporting period, the SSF, known in Arabic as *Al-Dara'a*, switched from the RSF to the SAF. This armed group primarily enjoyed support among Arabs in El Gezira, a state in Central Sudan. The SSF was commanded by Abu Aqla Keikel.[133] During Bashir's rule (1989-2019), Keikel served in the SAF. In August 2023, he joined the RSF, but in October 2024 he returned to the SAF. Thanks in part to this change of sides, the SAF managed to recapture El Gezira (see 2.5.4).[134]

Commentators described Keikel as the 'new Hemedti'. During Bashir's rule, under the watchful eye of the SAF, Hemedti managed to work his way up to the position of commander of the RSF paramilitary force. According to commentators, Keikel followed in Hemedti's footsteps and was similarly given the space and opportunity to develop a power base and a reputation for violence.[135] On 18 November 2025, it became known that Keikel had been wounded in combat in North Kordofan (see 2.5.6).[136]

The so-called *mustanfareen* ('the mobilised')[137] also fought on the side of the SAF (see also 6.2). These were civilians who had responded to the call by the SAF to take up arms against the RSF.[138] Like the fighters of the BBMB, many of these armed civilians wore yellow headbands.[139]

In the preceding reporting period, pro-democracy youths in Khartoum and Omdurman joined the SAF. Although they were critical of the SAF, they regarded the RSF as a 'greater evil'. This created a situation in which ideological opponents – former Islamist Bashir supporters and pro-democracy activists – were fighting under the same banner against a common enemy: the RSF.[140]

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[131] Also spelt 'Al-Misbah Abuzeid Talha' and 'Al-Misbah Abu Zaid Talha'.
[132] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 22. MEE, *Sudan's biggest self-described 'jihadi' group says it will disband once RSF defeated,* 12 March 2025. Ayin Network, *Sudan's army, Islamists, and the Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigade,* 25 March 2025. Confidential source, 27 March 2025. ACLED, *Two years of war in Sudan,* 15 April 2025, pp. 9 and 10. Agenzia Nova, *Sudan, The role of Islamist militias in the conflict worries Arab countries hostile to the Muslim Brotherhood,* 19 May 2025. Africa Intelligence, *Burhan's Islamist allies endanger rapprochement with US,* 22 September 2025.
[133] Also spelt 'Kaikal' and 'Kikel'.
[134] Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *Gezira State and the forgotten atrocities, A report on conflict-related sexual violence,* June 2024, p. 7. CIR, *Deaths, displacement, and destruction in Gezira state,* 21 November 2024. Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Armed group allied to the military attacks village,* 25 February 2025. Ayin Network, *From liberation to persecution, Sudan's army recapture of Al-Jazeera State,* 26 February 2025. ACLED, *Two years of war in Sudan,* 15 April 2025, pp. 10 and 11.
[135] Ayin Network, *From liberation to persecution, Sudan's army recapture of Al-Jazeera State,* 26 February 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[136] Darfur24, *Sudan Shield Forces commander injured in North Kordofan,* 18 November 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Clashes continue for a second day in three locations in North Kordofan,* 18 November 2025. SWM, *Widespread fighting engulfs Kordofan region,* 19 November 2025.
[137] Also spelt *mustanfireen.*
[138] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 66.
[139] Confidential source, 27 March 2025.
[140] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 23. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan revolutionaries join army ranks to 'expel RSF from Khartoum',* 4 October 2023.

During the reporting period, tensions between the Islamist and pro-democracy wings within the SAF camp came to light. After the SAF had recaptured Khartoum from the RSF (see 2.5.7), a difference of opinion arose as to who had contributed most to this victory. Talha, the commander of the BBMB, downplayed the contribution of the pro-democracy youths. The resistance committees condemned Talha's statements.[141]

On 17 August 2025, Burhan announced that the pro-government militias would henceforth be subject to the same military code of conduct as the SAF. Military analysts interpreted this measure as an attempt to get a better grip on the militias fighting on the side of the SAF.[142] At the time of writing, it was unclear what impact this measure had had on the conduct of the pro-government militias.[143]

2.2.2 Weapons, tactics and conduct

The SAF and their affiliated militias had various weapons at their disposal, including heavy machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), mortars, rocket launchers, armoured vehicles and fighter jets and helicopters.[144]

During the reporting period, the warring parties, including the SAF, made increasing use of drones.[145] For instance, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)[146] recorded more than 280 drone attacks by the SAF between 15 April 2023 and 16 August 2024. Virtually all of those attacks, some 98%, took place in the state of Khartoum.[147] As far as could be ascertained, the precise number of drone attacks during the reporting period was unknown.

The SAF had Iranian and Turkish-made drones at their disposal – in particular two types, the Mohajer-6 and the Bayraktar TB2. The former type was of Iranian manufacture; the latter type was of Turkish manufacture. Analysts largely attributed the SAF's victory in Khartoum to the deployment of Iranian and Turkish drones.[148]

During the reporting period, signals emerged suggesting that the SAF had used chemical weapons.[149] At the time of writing, little verifiable information was available in this regard. One source had understood that the SAF had used chlorine gas in North and South Darfur.[150] The suspicion had already arisen in the preceding reporting period that the SAF had used poison in an air strike on a water well near Mellit,[151] a town in North Darfur that was under the control of the RSF. The SAF air force dropped barrel bombs, killing seven herders and more than 350 camels. Subsequently, a substance resembling ash was found at the site. This prompted the suspicion that the SAF had poisoned the water well.[152]

[141] Sudans Post, *Army-aligned Islamist commander's remarks spur outrage in Omdurman,* 5 May 2025.
[142] Sudans Post, *Burhan orders supporting forces to fall under SAF legal code,* 18 August 2025.
[143] Confidential source, 11 November 2025. Confidential source, 17 November 2025.
[144] UNSC, *Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan,* 15 January 2024, p. 13.
[145] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's army, RSF escalate conflict with advanced drone warfare,* 15 September 2025.
[146] ACLED is an NGO engaged in collecting, analysing and charting conflict data. It has a web page specifically dedicated to Sudan: https://acleddata.com/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/.
[147] ACLED, *Drone warfare reaches deeper into Sudan as peace talks stall,* 23 August 2024, p. 3.
[148] FT, *Military briefing, The foreign drones that turned Sudan's civil war,* 18 May 2025. Radio Dabanga, *RSF claim 'Baykar Bayraktar Akıncı drone downed over South Darfur capital',* 26 August 2025.
[149] Early in the 21st century, the Sudanese government army had used chemical weapons in Darfur. Hari, *De tolk,* published in 2008, p. 49-51.
[150] Confidential source, 26 May 2025.
[151] Also spelt 'Melit'.
[152] SWM, *Hundreds of camels killed in North Darfur attack,* 28 April 2024.

A *France 24* investigative team brought to light the fact that the SAF had used chlorine gas. Based on open source intelligence (OSINT), the investigators of this French news channel established that the SAF had dropped barrel bombs filled with chlorine gas at an oil refinery north of Khartoum in September 2024. At that time, the refinery was in the hands of the RSF. International law prohibits the use of chlorine gas as a weapon.[153]

In their actions, the SAF took no account of the Protection of Civilians (PoC). For instance, the air force bombed civilian infrastructure, schools, markets and hospitals. According to the US and the UN Human Rights Council, this took place in an 'arbitrary' manner. The SAF and affiliated militias also carried out extrajudicial executions.[154] The aerial bombings and extrajudicial executions are described in more detail below. Attacks on health infrastructure are discussed in section 7.6.

The SAF air force had bombed densely populated areas and neighbourhoods during the preceding period, leading to loss of life not only among RSF fighters but also among civilians.[155] This pattern continued during the reporting period.[156] For instance, in the first week of December 2024, the SAF conducted a series of air strikes on various markets in North Darfur and elsewhere. Nearly two hundred civilians lost their lives.[157] Subsection 2.5.8 discusses the use of air power by the SAF in North and South Darfur in more detail.

One source pointed out that the SAF's bombing of civilian targets, such as busy markets, in Darfur and Kordofan played into the RSF's hands. They allowed the RSF to present itself as the protector of a civilian population that already felt marginalised by the Sudanese authorities (see also 1.3.2 and 2.3.1).[158]

As stated, the SAF and affiliated militias also carried out extrajudicial executions. *Sudan War Monitor* (SWM) referred to a 'widespread' and 'systematic' pattern. This collective of data researchers and journalists (including Sudanese journalists) recorded war crimes of this kind committed by individual SAF soldiers, groups of SAF soldiers, members of security services and fighters belonging to pro-SAF militias such as the BBMB and the SSF. SWM documented extrajudicial executions of RSF fighters and (alleged) RSF collaborators taking place after the SAF had recaptured a particular area from the RSF. The SWM differentiated three waves of extrajudicial executions. The first wave took place in Wad Madani and the surrounding area in January 2025 (see 2.5.4), the second wave in the north and east of Khartoum from February to early March 2025 and the third wave in Khartoum proper from late March to early April 2025 (see 2.5.7).[159]

In some cases, the SAF and their affiliated militias suspected persons of collaboration with the RSF due to their ethnicity.[160] For instance, Kanabi – descendants of African migrant workers from Darfur, the Nuba mountains, South Sudan and elsewhere – became the victims of extrajudicial executions when the SAF recaptured El Gezira from the RSF in January 2025 (see 2.5.4).[161] Section 5.10

[153] France 24, *Videos show the Sudanese army's use of chlorine gas as a weapon,* 9 October 2025.
[154] The New York Times, *Sudan's army used chemical weapons against rival forces, U.S. officials say,* 17 January 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities, Report of the independent international Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan,* 5 September 2025, pp. 7 and 11.
[155] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 23 and 24.
[156] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[157] SWM, *Sudanese Air Force kills nearly 200 civilians in attacks on markets,* 10 December 2024.
[158] Confidential source, 10 April 2025.
[159] SWM, *Investigation, Sudan Army commits mass executions in captured territories,* 15 April 2025.
[160] Confidential source, 13 November 2025.
[161] Confidential source, 6 November 2025.

provides an overview of perceptions and criteria that actors of persecution used to determine a person's ethnicity or regional descent.

During the preceding reporting period, SAF soldiers engaged in looting.[162] After the SAF and their affiliated militias had retaken Wad Madani and Khartoum from the RSF, reports appeared that SAF soldiers and pro-SAF militia fighters had systematically looted houses and shops. The stolen goods, such as furniture and electronic products, were subsequently openly sold at markets.[163]

2.3 RSF and affiliated militias

2.3.1 Profile and composition

The RSF emerged from the *Janjaweed*, an Arab militia that committed crimes against humanity and war crimes against African population groups in Darfur, such as the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa, in the early 21st century[164].[165] The Janjaweed were acting on the orders of former president Bashir. For this reason, the International Criminal Court[166] in The Hague indicted him of war crimes in Darfur.[167] International media described the violence by the Janjaweed in Darfur as the 'first genocide of the 21st century'.[168]

The RSF mainly enjoyed support among Arab population groups in Darfur and Kordofan.[169] One source estimated that the RSF consisted of approximately eighty percent Arabs.[170] The source did not indicate what this percentage was based on.

Nevertheless, Africans also served in the ranks of the RSF,[171] including so-called 'Falata', descendants of West African migrants.[172] In addition, various armed groups, which consisted of both Arab and African fighters, had affiliated themselves with the RSF. They were the Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council (SLM-TC) of Al-Hadi Idris and the Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces (GSLF) of Al-Tahir Hajar.[173] Idris belonged to the Tunjur, a population group which is closely related to the Fur, and Hajar to the Zaghawa.[174]

During the reporting period, foreign mercenaries also fought on the side of the RSF. They included fighters hailing from South Sudan (see 1.6.6) and Chad (see 1.6.3).[175]

During the reporting period, there were also media reports about Colombian mercenaries serving under the flag of the RSF. They were known as the 'Desert Wolves'.[176] In early December 2024, a Colombian newspaper estimated their

[162] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 34.
[163] Sudan Tribune, *After routing paramilitaries, Sudan's army facing looting claims,* 5 June 2025.
[164] In particular in the period between 2004 and 2008. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 64.
[165] Janjaweed translates roughly to 'devils on horses', 'evil spirits on horses' or 'shooters on horses', because these paramilitaries rode on horses and camels.
[166] In French, the International Criminal Court is known as the *Cour Pénale Internationale* (CPI). The ICC has a web page dedicated to Darfur: https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur.
[167] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 11 and 12. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 69. The Economist, *Hemedti,* 7 November 2025.
[168]Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 5 and 219.
[169] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. SWM, *Introductory guide to Sudan's war,* 14 November 2025.
[170] Confidential source, 10 April 2025.
[171] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[172] Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[173] Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[174] Confidential source, 22 May 2025.
[175] Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 14 May 2025. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Darfur24, *Darfur24 reveals foreign mercenaries fighting alongside RSF,* 26 August 2025.
[176] Known in Spanish as *Lobos del Desierto*.

number at at least three hundred.[177] A private security firm based in the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi had allegedly acted as an intermediary.[178] Allegedly, they were flown from the UAE to Benghazi, a city in eastern Libya under the control of Haftar. This Libyan warlord maintained links with the RSF (see 1.6.5). The Colombian mercenaries were then allegedly taken through the Libyan desert to Darfur. Another supply route apparently ran from the UAE via Bosaso,[179] a city in Puntland, a state in the north of Somalia that enjoyed a high degree of autonomy.[180] It was not possible to confirm or disprove the above on the basis of independently verified information.

News reports on the RSF focused heavily on the rapes and looting committed by this paramilitary force. Nevertheless, the RSF, represented in the political arena by the Taasis coalition (see 1.3.1 and 1.3.2), enjoyed a certain degree of support within society. This was particularly true of Arab population groups from peripheral parts of the country, such as Darfur and Kordofan. Some Kanabi, descendants of migrant workers who had in the past settled in El Gezira (see also 2.5.4),[181] also felt represented by the RSF and the affiliated Taasis coalition. These segments of Sudanese society had long had a problematic relationship with the central government and distrusted it.[182]

In February 2025, the RSF concluded an alliance with Al Hilu's Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) (see 1.3.2). This rebel movement had been waging an armed struggle against the Sudanese government since 2011. The SPLM-N operated primarily in the Nuba mountains in South Kordofan and described itself as championing the Nuba, a collection of African population groups.[183]

2.3.2 Weapons, tactics and conduct

The RSF and their affiliated militias had various weapons at their disposal, including heavy machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), mortars, rocket launchers, howitzers, man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADs) and unmanned combat aircraft.[184]

The weaponry of the RSF was known to be advanced. The international human rights organisation Amnesty International (hereinafter: Amnesty) analysed photos and videos taken in the aftermath of RSF attacks. These images revealed that the RSF were using Chinese-made guided bombs and howitzers. These weapons were manufactured by a Chinese state firm called China North Industries Group Corporation Limited, or Norinco Group for short (hereinafter: Norinco). According to Amnesty, these Chinese-made weapons were 'almost certainly' supplied to the RSF

[177] The newspaper in question was called *La Silla Vacia.*
[178] The company in question was called Global Security Services Group (GSSG).
[179] Le Monde, *Soudan, Des mercenaires colombiens arrêtés,* 4 December 2024. WSJ, *The global war machine supplying Colombian mercenaries to fight in Sudan,* 11 December 2024. Bellingcat, *Colombian mercenaries in transit to Sudan via Libya, What do we know?,* 13 December 2024. NOS, *Colombiaanse huurlingen duiken op in de oorlog in Sudan,* 5 August 2025. SWM, *Why Colombian mercenaries are fighting in Sudan,* 16 August 2025. MEE, *From Sudan to Ukraine, Why Colombian mercenaries keep fighting foreign wars,* 21 September 2025. The Guardian, *'War is a business', The Colombian mercenaries training Sudan's child fighters to 'go and get killed'*, 8 October 2025. MEE, *Exclusive, Inside the UAE's secret Sudan war operation at Somalia's Bosaso,* 31 October 2025. The Sentry, *Sudan mercenaries linked to business partner of top UAE bureaucrat,* November 2025, pp. 1 and 3.
[180] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia,* April 2025, p. 8.
[181] Also spelt 'Canabi'.
[182] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Darfur24, *Thousands rally in Nyala to support RSF's parallel government*, 3 August 2025.
[183] Confidential source, 1 May 2025. SWM, *Introductory guide to Sudan's war,* 14 November 2025.
[184] UNSC, *Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan,* 15 January 2024, pp. 13-15, 17, 41 and 42.

by the UAE (see also 1.6.2).[185] Using OSINT, *Ayin Network* (hereinafter: *Ayin*)[186] also determined that the RSF were using weapons of Chinese manufacture. This Sudanese news network likewise came to the conclusion that the aforementioned weapons were manufactured by Norinco. One of the weapons systems identified by *Ayin* were type CH-95 strategic drones.[187]

Like the SAF, the RSF increasingly conducted drone strikes. These strikes were primarily aimed at critical infrastructure and civilian targets in the areas controlled by the SAF. For example, in April 2025, the RSF attacked a hydroelectric dam at Merowe in Northern State and a power station and fuel depot at Atbara in the state of Red Sea. The attacks resulted in power outages. Although the RSF had been driven out of Khartoum (see 2.5.7), these drone attacks showed that they could strike deep inside SAF territory.[188]

Between 4 and 7 May 2025, a series of drone attacks on Port Sudan took place. The SAF had established its headquarters in this city (see 1.2). Until then, Port Sudan had remained free from large-scale conflict-related violence.[189] The drones hit both military and civilian targets, specifically the international airport, the power station, various fuel depots and warehouses and an air force base. The drone attacks resulted in power outages and water shortages in Port Sudan.[190] The media reports did not specify victim numbers.

On 9 September 2025, the RSF carried out a series of drone attacks on Khartoum. The suicide drones hit a power station in Ombada, a district in the west of Omdurman,[191] an oil refinery and two military bases. As a result, large parts of Khartoum were cut off from power. It was the most serious drone attack since those on Port Sudan in early May 2025.[192] The media reports did not specify victim numbers. The Taasis coalition in Nyala claimed responsibility for the drone attacks on Khartoum and said they were retribution for the attacks by the SAF on hospitals and other civilian targets in Darfur and Kordofan (see 2.2.2).[193]

On 21 October 2025, the RSF carried out a series of drone attacks on Khartoum's international airport. This series of attacks took place one day before the intended reopening of the airport. It was not known how extensive the damage was or whether there were any casualties.[194] Nevertheless, on 22 October 2025, the airport

[185] Amnesty International, *Advanced weaponry provided by UAE identified in breach of arms embargo – new investigation,* 8 May 2025.
[186] *Ayin* is an independent news network that enables Sudanese journalists to report on sensitive subjects. See https://3ayin.com/en/ for more information on Ayin.
[187] Ayin Network, *China's hidden hands, How Chinese weapons are fueling both side of Sudan's war,* 3 June 2025.
[188] Sudan Tribune, *Drone attacks reshape Sudan war, targeting infrastructure and civilians,* 17 April 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, pp. 10 and 11.
[189] During the preceding reporting period, a gun battle took place in Port Sudan between the SAF and a local militia originating from the Beja community. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 42.
[190] CIR, *Alleged drone strikes in Port Sudan,* 13 May 2025. BBC, *Port Sudan strikes, Drone attacks raise stakes in new phase of bloody civil war,* 15 May 2025. Yale School of Public Health, *13 long-range suicide drones and launch platforms near Nyala Airport, May 2025,* 12 September 2025, p. 5.
[191] Also spelt 'Umbeddah'.
[192] Sudans Post, *RSF launches large-scale drone attacks on multiple targets in Khartoum,* 8 September 2025. Darfur24, *Drones hit various sites across Khartoum, residents report,* 9 September 2025. Sudan Tribune, *RSF drone attacks hit Khartoum, cause power outage,* 9 September 2025. SWM, *Drone barrage targets Khartoum's three cities,* 9 September 2025. Sudans Post, *Khartoum refinery damaged as RSF escalates drone war, SAF government confirms,* 10 January 2025.
[193] Darfur24, *TASIS claims drone strikes on Khartoum sites,* 9 September 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's Tasis coalition claims Tuesday's drone strikes on army,* 9 September 2025.
[194] Al Jazeera, *Drone attack in Sudan threatens Khartoum airport's reopening: Reports,* 21 October 2025. BBC, *Drone attack hits Sudan's capital ahead of planned airport reopening,* 21 October 2025. Darfur24, *Three suicide drones target Khartoum Airport,* 21 October 2025. Moatinoon, *Drones target Khartoum International Airport,* 21 October 2025. Radio Tamazuj, *Sudan, Drone attack hits Khartoum airport area ahead of reopening,* 21 October 2025. Sudans Post, *RSF drone strike hits Khartoum Airport ahead of reopening,* 21 October 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Drones hit Khartoum airport on eve of planned reopening,* 21 October 2025.

authorities reported that the airport was back in use and that the first civilian aircraft since April 2023 had landed there.[195]

The drone attacks ultimately had consequences for the humanitarian situation, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. Attacks on health infrastructure are specifically dealt with in section 7.6

In the preceding reporting period, the RSF and its allies used sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (hereinafter: sexual violence) as a weapon of war, particularly against women and girls. In Darfur, the sexual violence took on a strongly racial and Afrophobic dimension, with the perpetrators explicitly referring to the ethnicity and/or black skin colour of their victims of African descent. This dynamic was especially present in sexual violence against Masalit women and girls in West Darfur. SAF soldiers also committed sexual violence, but in the case of the RSF, sexual violence seemed more widespread and more pronounced.[196]

In the current reporting period, the RSF and its allies continued to use sexual violence as a weapon of war against women and girls in particular. One of the objectives of the sexual violence was to break the social cohesion of communities regarded as hostile. The UN Human Rights Council described the sexual violence by the RSF as 'large-scale', 'widespread' and 'systematic'. It is nevertheless the case that SAF soldiers also committed sexual violence.[197] Section 8.3 examines the phenomenon of sexual violence as a weapon of war in more detail, looking at the available data on sexual violence and the consequences of rapes (including gang rapes).

Like the SAF, the RSF committed war crimes, including extrajudicial executions (see section 3.4 for quantitative details on extrajudicial executions). The RSF appeared to commit war crimes on a larger scale than the SAF, although two sources pointed out that the RSF were more inclined to 'showcase' their acts on social media or 'celebrate' them in so-called 'trophy videos'.[198] The Sudanese government army, by contrast, was said to be more discreet, in particular the Military Intelligence Service (MIS), the intelligence arm of the SAF. This might have created a distorted image of the scale on which both sides committed war crimes, according to the two sources.[199]

The RSF and its allies did not constitute a streamlined whole in terms of command. This became clear, for example, after the RSF executed between 25 and 30 civilians in Salha, a district in the south of Omdurman on 27 April 2025. Footage of this mass execution appeared online. The senior command of the RSF denied any form of involvement, whereas an RSF commander in the south of Omdurman[200] claimed responsibility in a video and stated that his men had killed SAF personnel dressed in civilian clothing.[201] Such contradictions between the senior command and

[195] Sudan Tribune, *Khartoum airport reopens with first flight after two-year closure,* 22 October 2025.
[196] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 25, 38 and 93.
[197] Confidential source, 23 August 2024. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025. SIHA, *A lonely road, Standing up to sexual violence in Sudan,* 28 August 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Hoe het seksuele geweld in Soedan stilletjes doorgaat, 'Voor wegkijken heeft de wereld geen excuus',* published on 4 September 2025, updated on 5 September 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, pp. 8-10.
[198] The New York Times, *How 'trophy' videos link paramilitary commanders to war crimes in Sudan,* 31 December 2024.
[199] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[200] The commander in question was Jar El Nabi Abdalla, nicknamed 'Ostura'.
[201] SWM, *Rapid Support Forces execute civilians in Omdurman,* 29 April 2025.

commanders on the ground were characteristic of the actions and inadequate chain of command of the RSF, according to a source.[202]

2.4 Rebel groups in Darfur

Three rebel groups strongly influenced the political and military balance of power in Darfur. The term 'rebel group' is somewhat confusing, because two of the groups were fighting on the side of the Sudanese authorities and one group remained aloof from the conflict between the SAF and the RSF. In line with the consulted sources, this COI Report uses the term 'rebel groups'. Below is a description of how the aforementioned groups related to each other and to the SAF and the RSF.

In 2003, rebel movements in Darfur took up arms against the Arab-dominated government of president Bashir. They claimed to be fighting against the marginalisation of African population groups in Darfur. The two main rebel armies were the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The SLA had a secular profile, while the JEM was of Islamist bent.[203] The African rebels in Darfur were known by the nickname *Toroboro*, a reference to Tora Bora, a cave complex in Afghanistan used as a hideout by Osama bin Laden.[204] This nickname for African rebels in Darfur was less commonly used in the reporting period.[205]

During the course of the conflict in Darfur, which never completely came to an end,[206] the SLA split into multiple factions. The two most prominent SLA factions were those of Abdel Wahid Al Nur and Minni Arko Minawi. The faction of Abdel Wahid (SLA/AW) enjoyed particular support among the Fur and was concentrated in the Jebel Marra mountains[207] in central Darfur.[208] The faction of Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) enjoyed particular support among the Zaghawa and for a long time had El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, as its headquarters. The JEM was led by Jibril Ibrahim and also consisted largely of Zaghawa.[209]

In October 2020, the civilian-military transitional government (see 1.2) signed a peace agreement with groups including the SLA/MM and the JEM in the South Sudanese capital of Juba. The SLA/AW refused to sign the treaty. A key provision of the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA), as it was known, was the creation of a joint force that would be responsible for protecting civilians in Darfur. This force was known in full as the Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements (JSAMF), or Joint Force for short. When the war between the SAF and the RSF broke out in April 2023, the Joint Force initially adopted a neutral position. In November 2023, it sided with the SAF.[210] During the reporting period, the Joint Force and the RSF clashed, in particular in North Darfur (see 2.5.8).[211]

[202] Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[203] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 11.
[204] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 34. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 68 and 69.
[205] Confidential source, 27 March 2025. Confidential source, 25 April 2025.
[206] Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 165.
[207] *Jebel* means 'mountain' in Arabic.
[208] The political arm of the SLA/AW is known as the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). This group has its own website: https://slma.net/en/.
[209] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 13, 27 and 28.
[210] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 12, 13 and 27. ACLED, *Two years of war in Sudan,* 15 April 2025, p. 8. SWM, *Introductory guide to Sudan's war,* 14 November 2025.
[211] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 22 April 2025.

The same Arab and African population groups inhabit both sides of the border between Darfur and eastern Chad. In this connection, a UN Panel of Experts (PoE) reported that Zaghawa from Chad had joined the Joint Force. They had done so in solidarity with their fellow Zaghawa in North Darfur.[212]

The SLA/AW remained concentrated in the Jebel Marra mountains, a green mountainous region with volcanic lakes. The rebel group described its area of control, which according to a source was the size of Belgium, as 'liberated territory'. In name, the SLA/AW remained neutral. The group refused to join the Taasis alliance (see 1.3.2), but stated that the Islamists of the former Bashir regime had started the war, which was consistent with the narrative of the RSF. The SLA/AW also maintained contacts with Somoud (see 1.3.1) and the SPLM-N (see 1.3.2). Sources had the impression that the SLA/AW and the RSF tolerated each other's presence, because no violent incidents had taken place between the two parties, even though the SLA/AW's area of control was completely surrounded by the RSF.[213] A group of UN experts determined that the SLA/AW was selling gold to the RSF.[214]

2.5 The course of the conflict

2.5.1 Introduction

At the time of writing, battles were raging in Sudan. The balance of power on the battlefield had not yet crystallised. Particularly at the local level, the security situation remained fluid in nature, and the front line was liable to shift at any time. The SAF and RSF enjoyed fluctuating fortunes, and had the ability to strike deep within each other's areas of control. None of the parties appeared to have the upper hand that would allow them to win a final victory on the battlefield.[215]

Despite the fluctuating front lines, the following general picture emerged. At the time of writing, northern, eastern and central Sudan in particular were under the control of the SAF. The RSF, by contrast, controlled large parts of Darfur and Kordofan, situated in the west and south of the country. The neutral SLA/AW retained its area of control in the Jebel Marra mountains in central Darfur. Al Hilu's SPLM-N, which was allied with the RSF in the Taasis coalition (see 1.3.2), principally controlled the Nuba mountains in South Kordofan.[216] An overview map of the different areas of control in Sudan as of 1 November 2025 is provided in section 14.2.

An outline of the military operations is provided below. This description is by no means exhaustive. In view of the large number of hostilities in the reporting period, not all engagements can be considered individually. The description below sheds

[212] VNVR, *Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan,* 17 April 2025, pp. 21 and 22.
[213] Baaijens, *Woestijnnomaden*, published in 2003, p. 33. Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 22 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025. BBC, *Sudan's fertile region where food is rotting amid famine and war,* 26 October 2025. Confidential source, 11 November 2025.
[214] UNSC, *Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan,* 17 April 2025, p. 29.
[215] Confidential source, 27 March 2025. BBC, *Sudan in danger of self-destructing as conflict and famine reign,* 17 June 2025. Sudan Today, *Sudan conflict "far from over" as fighting deepens hunger and displacement crisis, says analyst,* 23 July 2025. CFR, *The forgotten war in Sudan,* 7 November 2025.
[216] BBC, *Sudan war, A simple guide to what is happening,* 21 March 2025. Sudan Today, *Sudan conflict "far from over" as fighting deepens hunger and displacement crisis,* 23 July 2025. Al Jazeera, *War in Sudan, Humanitarian, fighting, control developments, August 2025,* 31 August 2025. The Continent, *The war about everything in Sudan,* 16 August 2025, p. 14. Al Jazeera, *Sudan has vast oil, gold and agricultural resources, Who controls them?,* 20 November 2025. SZ, *Der ignorierte Krieg,* 20 November 2025.

light on how the front lines between the different areas of control came about and remained subject to change.
This synthesis reveals that during the reporting period, fighting took place primarily in El Gezira (see 2.5.4), Khartoum (see 2.5.7), North Darfur (see 2.5.8) and the entire Kordofan region (see 2.5.2, 2.5.6 and 2.5.9). The qualitative conflict data in the third chapter clarify this further. At the time of writing, the fighting in El Gezira and Khartoum had been concluded in favour of the SAF and the RSF had strengthened their grip on Darfur with the capture of El Fasher. As a result, the centre of gravity of the conflict had shifted to the entire Kordofan region.[217]

The same data in Chapter 3 reveal that relatively few violent incidents took place in Gedaref, Kassala, River Nile and Red Sea during the reporting period. These eastern states were under the control of the SAF during the reporting period. Eastern Sudan did prove vulnerable to drone attacks, as witnessed by the series of drone attacks on Port Sudan from early May 2025 (see 2.3.2).

Below is a description of the violence per state or region.

2.5.2 West Kordofan

On 20 June 2024, the RSF captured Al Fula, the capital of West Kordofan.[218] RSF fighters shared videos showing them killing dozens of people.[219] It was not clear from media reports whether these were SAF prisoners of war or civilians.

An important victory for the RSF in West Kordofan took place later in the reporting period, on 1 May 2025. On that date, they captured the strategically situated city of Al Nahud.[220] The Qatari news channel *Al Jazeera* understood from sources that the RSF had killed nineteen people in taking Al Nahud. The dead included a doctor, a journalist and a police officer.[221]

Following this action, two towns in West Kordofan remained under the control of the SAF, namely Babanusa[222] and Heglig. They were located in an oil-rich area close to the border with South Sudan.[223]

On 23 July 2025, the RSF attacked Brima Rashian, a village situated north of Al Nahud. The paramilitaries reached the centre of the village in armed vehicles before opening fire indiscriminately on the marketplace and houses. According to a Sudanese doctors' association, around thirty people were killed and more than forty injured.[224] A local relief committee reported the casualties as 32 dead and more than 50 wounded.[225] The attack on Brima Rashian was part of an escalation of violence that took place in the entire Kordofan region (see also 2.5.6).

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[217] OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan, 1 January to 30 June 2025,* 19 September 2025, pp. 1, 3 and 4. The Independent, *Sudan war displaces 2,000 in three days as North Kordofan becomes new flashpoint,* 10 November 2025. SWM, *Widespread fighting engulfs Kordofan region,* 19 November 2025. Al Jazeera, *Sudan has vast oil, gold and agricultural resources,* 20 November 2025. NOS, *Na de val van Al-Fasher schuift front in Sudan op: 'Situatie wordt steeds erger',* 21 November 2025.
[218] Al Jazeera, *Sudan's RSF captures key army stronghold of el-Fula,* 20 June 2024. SWM, *'Al Fula has fallen', RSF seize West Kordofan capital*, 20 June 2024. ACLED, *The RSF marches on Sennar and West Kordofan,* 12 July 2024, pp. 2, 5 and 6.
[219] SWM, *'Al Fula has fallen',* 20 June 2024.
[220] Also spelt 'An Nuhud'. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. SWM, *RSF seizes control of Al Nahud in latest blow to SAF*, 1 May 2025.
[221] Al Jazeera, *Sudanese paramilitary RSF kills 19 after taking city of al-Nahud: sources,* 2 May 2025.
[222] Also spelt 'Babnusa', 'Babnousa' and 'Babanousa'.
[223] SWM, *RSF seizes control of Al Nahud in latest blow to SAF*, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 17 November 2025.
[224] UN, *Daily press briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General,* 24 July 2025.
[225] Associated Press (AP), *Paramilitary group kills 32 in rampage in southern Sudan, activist group says,* 24 July 2025.

In the course of November 2025, the RSF attacked Babanusa with weapons including artillery and drones.[226] On 20 November 2025, the Sudan Doctors Network (SDN), a professional group representing doctors in Sudan,[227] reported that the RSF had killed 147 civilians in Babanusa and the surrounding area.[228]

2.5.3 Sennar

In late June 2024, the RSF conducted a lightning advance in the south-eastern state of Sennar, and on 30 June they took Singa, the state capital.[229] The media reports did not specify victim numbers in their descriptions of the above action.

However, the tide turned against the RSF, and on 23 November 2024 the SAF recaptured Singa.[230] The media reports again made no mention of the numbers of victims.

At the time of writing, Sennar was fully under the control of the SAF. The RSF were also absent from the areas adjacent to Sennar.[231]

2.5.4 El Gezira

In the central Sudanese state of El Gezira, the conflict between the SAF and the RSF similarly manifested itself as a war of movement, with the front line liable to sudden shifts. In December 2023, the RSF captured Wad Madani, the capital of El Gezira, in a surprise attack. The majority of El Gezira subsequently came under the control of the RSF.[232] However, on 11 January 2025, the SAF succeeded in retaking Wad Madani.[233]

Both the RSF and SAF committed excesses in El Gezira during the reporting period. For example, on 5 June 2024, the RSF carried out a massacre in Wad al-Noura, a village in El Gezira. Reports of the number of dead varied. SWM analysed a photograph of a mass burial that took place following the attack on the village. This news platform counted between 50 and 55 bodies wrapped in shrouds.[234] Pro-democracy activists reported that at least 107 people had been killed.[235] The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported at least 150 dead villagers.[236]

The inhabitants of al-Tekeina, a village on the Blue Nile, managed to resist the RSF during 2024. They blocked roads leading to the village and dug trenches. With financial assistance from the diaspora, the villagers bought weapons including RPGs.

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[226] Radio Dabanga, *Fierce clashes erupt in West Kordofan as RSF claim gains,* 13 November 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese army, RSF clash in fierce battles in Babanusa,* 16 November 2025. Al Jazeera, *Battles in West Kordofan as Sudan army resists RSF's eastward push,* 17 November 2025. Confidential source, 17 November 2025. SWM, *Widespread fighting engulfs Kordofan region,* 19 November 2025.
[227] Also known as the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate. See https://sudandoctors.net for more information on the SDN.
[228] Sudan Tribune*, Sudanese doctors reveal hundreds of civilians killed, 57 women raped in Sudan's Barra, Babnousa,* 20 November 2025.
[229] Also spelt 'Sinja' and 'Sinjah'. Al Jazeera, *Sudan's RSF claims it has captured a key city in the southeast,* 30 June 2024. SWM, *Blitzkrieg, RSF advance deep into Sennar State and storm into the capital Sinja,* 30 June 2024. The Independent, *Paramilitary forces attack a city under military control in central Sudan, opening a new front,* 30 June 2024. NRC, *Rebellen versterken greep op Soedan,* 2 July 2024. ACLED, *The RSF marches on Sennar and West Kordofan,* 12 July 2024, pp. 2 and 4.
[230] Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese army recaptures capital of Sennar State,* 23 November 2024. SWM, *Sudan army regains control of Sinja,* 23 November 2024.
[231] Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[232] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 43.
[233] MEE, *Sudanese army says it captured key RSF-held capital of al-Jazira state,* 11 January 2025. SWM, *Sudan army recaptures Wad Madani city,* 11 January 2025. Al Jazeera, *How strategic is Wad Madani city, retaken by Sudan army?,* 12 January 2025. CIR, *Sudanese Armed Forces recaptures key city of Wad Madani,* 25 January 2025. Confidential source, 7 February 2025.
[234] SWM, *RSF kill dozens of villagers in Jazira State,* 6 June 2024.
[235] Radio Dabanga, *100+ 'massacred' by RSF in Sudan's El Gezira,* 6 June 2024.
[236] BBC, *At least 150 villagers feared dead in Sudan massacre,* 6 June 2024.

In May 2024, 22 villagers died and 40 were wounded in an attack by the RSF. In December 2024, an RSF attack claimed the lives of thirty villagers and resulted in approximately fifty being injured. In January 2025, the SAF drove the RSF out of El Gezira, giving al-Tekeina some breathing space.[237]

When the SAF and their affiliated militias recaptured El Gezira in January 2025, they engaged in violent reprisals against communities they regarded as being 'pro-RSF'. South Sudanese and Kanabi in particular were targeted.[238]

Due to the presence of South Sudanese mercenaries in the ranks of the RSF (see 1.6.6), there was a perception among the SAF and its allies that South Sudanese were favourably disposed towards the RSF. Between 11 and 15 January 2025, at least 27 South Sudanese were killed in El Gezira by the SAF and their affiliated militias.[239] In response, anti-Sudanese riots broke out in South Sudan, resulting in the deaths of sixteen Sudanese according to the South Sudanese police.[240]

Another wave of violent reprisals by the SAF and their affiliated militias was aimed at the Kanabi. In the perception of the SAF, they had supported the RSF during its violent tenure in El Gezira. The Kanabi are descended from migrant workers who in the past settled in El Gezira to work in the agriculture sector. The roots of the Kanabi are divided between Darfur, the Nuba mountains in South Kordofan, South Sudan and the Sahel. In that sense, the Kanabi are not so much an ethnicity as a socio-economic 'caste'. The Kanabi are generally poorly educated and live mostly in their own villages.[241] The names of the villages in question could not be ascertained.

On 9 December 2024, the SSF, a militia affiliated with the SAF (see 2.2.1), led the attack on a village in El Gezira inhabited by the Kanabi. According to a Kanabi[242] interest group, the perpetrators attacked with guns and knives, burning down 580 houses and stealing 250 cows, 300 goats and 45 sheep. It was also reported that the harvest was partially looted and partially burned down, and that the attackers stole vehicles, money and other personal property.[243] The Kanabi interest group did not report victim numbers.

In January 2025, the SAF and their affiliated militias attacked ten Kanabi settlements in El Gezira.[244] For example, on 10 January 2025, the SSF targeted the village of Tayba. The international human rights organisation Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented that at least 26 people died in the attack, including 1 child. The SSF militia members also looted the property of civilians, including food, and set fire to houses.[245]

[237] MEE, *'I learnt to fire an RPG with YouTube', How one Sudanese village fought the RSF – and won,* 29 August 2025.
[238] Confidential source, 7 February 2025. MEE, *'A history of oppression', Sudan's Kanabi community targeted by both sides in war*, 12 February 2025. Confidential source, 24 April 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, p. 6. OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, pp. 7 and 8.
[239] Sudans Post, *27 South Sudanese nationals killed by SAF-affiliated militias in Sudan's Al Jazirah State,* 16 January 2025.
[240] Reuters, *South Sudan says 16 Sudanese nationals killed in last week's unrest,* 20 January 2025.
[241] Radio Dabanga, *'Extrajudicial killings, abductions, and torture follow Sudan army's victory in Wad Madani',* 14 January 2025. MEE, *'A history of oppression',* 12 February 2025. Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, p. 6.
[242] Variously identified as Canabi Congress or Al-Kanabi Conference.
[243] Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), *Report from the Al-Kanabi Conference,* 11 July 2025.
[244] CIR, *Kanabi settlements burn as violence spreads across Gezira,* 31 January 2025.
[245] HRW, *Armed group allied to the military attacks village,* 25 February 2025.

2.5.5 White Nile

The southern state of White Nile is strategically located between the larger Kordofan region and the centre of the country. This state also borders South Sudan.

In February 2025, the SAF recaptured territory in White Nile from the RSF. In response, the RSF carried out reprisals against the civilian population[246] and attacked various villages near El Geteina, a town in White Nile, over the course of three days.[247] According to Emergency Lawyers, a local lawyers' group, more than two hundred people died. The Sudanese authorities put the number of deaths at 433.[248] It was unclear whether the reprisals by the RSF against civilians in White Nile were targeted against specific individuals.[249]

Since May 2025, there has been a sharp decline in conflict-related violence in White Nile. The RSF carried out several drone attacks on the positions of the SAF in White Nile and looted a village close to the border with North Kordofan. At the time of writing, White Nile was under the control of the SAF.[250]

2.5.6 North Kordofan

In the preceding reporting period, El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan,[251] was in the hands of the SAF. However, about ninety percent of North Kordofan was under the control of the RSF, with the result that El Obeid was virtually encircled.[252]

On 23 February 2025, the SAF succeeded in relieving El Obeid. This brought an end to a siege that had lasted nearly two years. In view of El Obeid's strategic location on the road connecting Khartoum and Darfur, the relief of El Obeid was an important victory for the SAF.[253]

The fact that El Obeid had been relieved by the SAF in no way meant that it was spared conflict-related violence. The RSF held on to their position in Bara, a town north of El Obeid. From Bara[254], the RSF subjected El Obeid to artillery fire. The shelling hit civilian targets, including residential neighbourhoods and schools.[255]

The examples of violence listed below are provided solely for illustrative purposes and should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list. On 9 April 2025, artillery shelling by the RSF claimed seven lives in El Obeid. According to the Sudanese Ministry of Health, the victims were all members of the same family.[256] On 14 May 2025, at least four civilians were killed in El Obeid by RSF artillery fire, according to the SDN. In addition, eight people were injured.[257]

[246] Confidential source, 27 August 2025.
[247] Also spelt 'al-Gitaina' and 'Al Qutaynah'.
[248] Al Jazeera, *Sudan paramilitaries kill hundreds in White Nile villages: NGO,* 18 February 2025. MEE, *Sudan's RSF massacres 433 people as it forms parallel 'peace government',* 18 February 2025. The Guardian, *Sudan military group kills more than 200 people in three-day attack, activists say,* 18 February 2025.
[249] Confidential source, 17 November 2025.
[250] Confidential source, 27 August 2025.
[251] Also spelt 'Al-Ubayyid'.
[252] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 78.
[253] BBC, *Sudan army ends two-year siege of key city,* 24 February 2025. MEE, *Sudan's army breaks RSF siege on strategic city of el-Obeid,* 24 February 2025. Sudans Post, *SAF breaks RSF siege of El Obeid, advances in Khartoum,* 24 February 2025. SWM, *Sudan army breaks RSF siege of El Obeid,* 24 February 2025. ACLED, *Two years of war in Sudan,* 15 April 2025, pp. 4 and 5.
[254] Also spelt 'Barah'.
[255] Confidential source, 24 March 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[256] Sudan Tribune, *RSF attacks kill at least 13 civilians in Sudan's El-Obeid, Al-Dabbah,* 9 April 2025.
[257] Sudans Post, *Four civilians killed, eight injured in RSF shelling on El Obeid – Sudanese Doctors,* 14 May 2025.

Between 10 and 13 July 2025, the RSF attacked several villages in the Bara area with heavy weaponry, including combat drones.[258] The attacks were part of an escalation of violence that took place in the wider Kordofan region (see also 2.5.2). The RSF fired on the villages, burned them down and killed hundreds of civilians. Some villagers were shot or stabbed to death, while others died in their burning homes.[259] UNICEF, the UN's children's rights organisation,[260] reported that more than 450 civilians had died, among them at least 35 children and 2 pregnant women.[261] According to Emergency Lawyers, there were nearly three hundred civilian deaths. The same group stated that there were no military targets in the villages.[262] Satellite images showed that one of the villages attacked had been deliberately destroyed by fire.[263]

On 7 August 2025, the RSF attacked two villages in North Kordofan, namely Markaz al-Ziyadiyah and Lamina al-Ziyadiyah. According to Emergency Lawyers, at least eighteen civilians died and dozens were injured.[264] According to a Sudanese government employee, the RSF deliberately attacked villages in North and West Kordofan in order to regain their grip on El Obeid.[265]

During the escalation of violence described above, it appeared that the RSF would again encircle and besiege El Obeid.[266] However, on 11 September 2025 the SAF captured Bara, an important RSF base in North Kordofan, after heavy fighting. The SAF were supported by the BBMB, the SSF, the mustanfareen (see 2.2.1) and the Joint Force (see 2.4). Media reports did not reveal how many combatants and civilians had died. With the capture of Bara, the pressure on El Obeid appeared to have eased.[267]

On 25 October 2025, the tide of war in North Kordofan appeared to turn again. On that date, the RSF retook Bara after heavy fighting.[268] Following the recapture of Bara, the RSF committed abuses against the civilian population. According to the SDN, the RSF killed 420 civilians in Bara and the surrounding area between 26 October and 20 November 2025.[269] The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)[270] recorded forty cases of conflict-related sexual violence in Bara. According to SIHA, the RSF used sexual violence against women and girls as a

[258] The villages in question included Shak al-Noum (also spelt 'Shag Alnom' and 'Shag al-Num') and Hilat Hamid.
[259] Al Jazeera, *Sudan's RSF kills about 300 people in North Kordofan, rights group says,* 15 July 2025. NOS, *Weer moordpartij in Sudanese dorpen: 'Aanvallen van criminele aard',* 15 July 2025. The Guardian, *Sudanese paramilitary RSF accused of killing almost 300 people in village raids,* 15 July 2025. UNICEF, *At least 35 children reportedly killed in attacks in communities in Sudan's North Kordofan State,* 15 July 2025. Sudan Tribune, *UN says at least 300 killed in 'brutal' attacks in Sudan's Kordofan,* 16 July 2025. SWM, *RSF rampages through North Kordofan villages, killing hundreds,* 17 July 2025. De Volkskrant, *Honderden burgers gedood bij nieuw geweld Soedan,* 19 July 2025.
[259] Yale School of Public Health, *RSF alleged massacre at Shag Alnom, Multidirectional attacks on El-Obeid,* 18 July 2025, p. 3.
[260] 'UNICEF' stands for United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF has a page specifically dedicated to Sudan: https://www.unicef.org/sudan/.
[261] UNICEF, *At least 35 children reportedly killed in attacks in communities in Sudan's North Kordofan State,* 15 July 2025.
[262] Al Jazeera, *Sudan's RSF kills about 300 people in North Kordofan,* 15 July 2025. NOS, *Weer moordpartij in Sudanese dorpen,* 15 July 2025. The Guardian, *Sudanese paramilitary RSF accused of killing almost 300 people in village raids,* 15 July 2025. SWM, *RSF rampages through North Kordofan villages,* 17 July 2025.
[263] Yale School of Public Health, *RSF alleged massacre at Shag Alnom, Multidirectional attacks on El-Obeid,* 18 July 2025, pp. 3 and 8.
[264] Darfur24, *Attack on two villages in North Kordofan leaves 18 civilians dead,* 9 August 2025. Sudan Tribune, *RSF kills 18 civilians in Sudan's North Kordofan, rights group says,* 10 August 2025.
[265] Sudan Tribune, *RSF kills 18 civilians in Sudan's North Kordofan,* 10 August 2025.
[266] Ayin Network, *"They came on motorbikes and started killing", RSF siege grips North Kordofan,* 22 June 2025. Confidential source, 25 July and 3 August 2025. SWM, *Deadly confrontations outside El Obeid,* 27 August 2025.
[267] Sudans Post, *Sudanese army captures Bara in major setback for RSF,* 11 September 2025. SWM, *RSF stronghold Bara falls to Sudan army,* 12 September 2025.
[268] SWM, *RSF captures army base in North Darfur capital,* 26 October 2025.
[269] Sudan Tribune*, Sudanese doctors reveal hundreds of civilians killed,* 20 November 2025.
[270] SIHA is a network of women's rights activists that is active in the Horn of Africa. See https://sihanet.org for more information on SIHA.

weapon of war (see section 8.3 for more information on conflict-related sexual violence, CRSV).[271]

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN's migration agency,[272] estimated that between 26 October and 9 November 2025, 38,990 people had fled the violence in North Kordofan.[273]

2.5.7 Khartoum

During the reporting period, the SAF achieved its biggest victory in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, as detailed below. Khartoum is located at the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile rivers, in the centre of the country. The White Nile and Blue Nile rivers merge at the island of Tuti. These two rivers and the main course of the Nile cut the city into three parts: Khartoum proper, Bahri (sometimes also referred to as 'North Khartoum') and Omdurman.[274] In this COI Report, 'Khartoum' refers to the entire city,[275] unless otherwise stated. As far as could be ascertained, the reporting did not specifically address conditions in the part of the state of Khartoum that falls outside of the eponymous city.

In the preceding reporting period, Khartoum was the scene of fierce fighting. At that time, the RSF controlled the majority of the city. However, the SAF did make gains in Omdurman towards the end of the preceding reporting period.[276] During the reporting period, the SAF and the affiliated militias succeeded in bringing the whole of Khartoum under their control. This process took place step by step in an offensive that began in late September 2024 and culminated in the recapture of the presidential palace in the city centre on 20 March 2025.[277]

Following the success of the SAF in late March 2025, the RSF managed to temporarily maintain its presence in the west and south of Omdurman.[278] On 20 May 2025, the RSF were forced to also relinquish its positions in the west and south of Omdurman, after which the whole of Khartoum fell into the hands of the SAF.[279]

The SAF and the RSF committed excesses in Khartoum (see also 2.2.2 and 2.3.2). The SAF and affiliated security services and militias executed (alleged) RSF collaborators in the city neighbourhoods they had recaptured from the RSF. Arab persons with roots in Darfur and Kordofan, where the RSF enjoyed the strongest support (see 2.3.1), were a particular target.[280] In late March 2025, at least twenty civilians were killed in Janoub Al Hezam, an area in the south of Khartoum.[281] Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, concluded that such

[271] SIHA, *Unchecked brutality in Barah, North Kordofan, Testimonies uncover systematic violence against women and girls,* 20 November 2025.
[272] The IOM is known in French as the *Organisation internationale pour les migrations* (OIM). See https://sudan.iom.int for more information on the work of the IOM in Sudan.
[273] IOM, *IOM Chief warns of imminent catastrophe as displacement surges in North Darfur,* 11 November 2025.
[274] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 33 and 114. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!", Sexual violence against women and girls in Sudan's capital,* July 2024, p. 3.
[275] The entire metropolitan area is also known as Greater Khartoum.
[276] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 33 and 113. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, pp. 21 and 22.
[277] SWM, *Sudan army reclaims Khartoum Bahri, advances in East Nile,* 21 February 2025. SWM, *Sudanese military captures presidential palace,* 21 March 2025. BBC, *Five key moments in the battle for Khartoum,* 22 March 2025. Confidential source, 27 March 2025. ACLED, *Two years of war in Sudan,* 15 April 2025, pp. 1 and 3.
[278] In particular, in Ombada in the west and Salha in the south of Omdurman. ACLED, *Two years of war in Sudan,* 15 April 2025, pp. 2 and 5. Confidential source, 24 April 2025.
[279] Al Jazeera, *Sudan's army declares Khartoum state 'completely free' of paramilitary RSF,* 20 May 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese army declares Khartoum state liberated,* 20 May 2025. SWM, *RSF loses last stronghold in Khartoum State,* 20 May 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Khartoum 'completely liberated' from RSF, says Sudan army,* 21 May 2025.
[280] OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, p. 8.
[281] Also spelt 'Janoub al-Hizam'.

extrajudicial executions were taking place on a 'widespread' scale. He condemned the practice and called on the SAF to put an end to it.[282]

On 27 April 2025, as the RSF were being driven out of Khartoum, they executed approximately thirty civilians in Salha, a district in the south of Omdurman. The victims included miners and children. The RSF suspected those killed of collaboration with the SAF. According to experts, the RSF deliberately induced fear in the civilian population with the aim of exercising control over them.[283]

2.5.8 Darfur

Introduction

Darfur is located in western Sudan and is about the size of Spain. The region consists of five states: North, East, South, Central and West Darfur. Darfur is home to population groups that identify or are referred to as 'Arab' or 'African' (see also 1.1).[284]

Since the majority of Darfur was in the hands of the RSF during the reporting period, it has been decided to describe the whole region in this subsection. Where necessary and possible, a distinction will be made between the different states that together make up Darfur.

During the reporting period, security incidents and human rights violations took place throughout Darfur, as detailed below. Between April 2023 and early July 2025, one source had documented more than nine thousand human rights violations throughout the whole of Darfur. In this regard, 'human rights violations' refer to murders, kidnappings for ransom, unlawful arrests,[285] torture, destruction of property, etc. According to the source, three thousand violations took place in West Darfur, one thousand violations in Zalingei (the capital of Central Darfur), more than two thousand violations in South Darfur and more than three thousand violations in El Fasher (the capital of North Darfur).[286]

Siege of El Fasher

During the preceding reporting period, the RSF rapidly brought much of Darfur under their control. As part of their campaign, they succeeded in capturing four of the five state capitals in Darfur, Nyala (South Darfur), Zalingei (Central Darfur), El Geneina (West Darfur)[287] and El Daein (East Darfur). El Fasher (North Darfur) was the only state capital in Darfur that was not yet fully in the hands of the RSF. This desert city was partly controlled by the SAF and the Joint Force, a combined force made up of former rebel groups from Darfur. The Joint Force had been fighting on the side of the SAF since November 2023 (see 2.4).[288]

[282] OHCHR, *UN Human Rights Chief appalled by widespread extrajudicial killings in Khartoum*, 3 April 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Local group reports civilian killing, mass arrests by pro-army forces South of Khartoum,* 3 April 2025.
[283] Al Jazeera, *Sudan Doctors Network accuses RSF of 'war crimes' after 31 killed,* 27 April 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Outcry as RSF accused of executing 31 civilians in Omdurman,* 28 April 2025. SWM, *Rapid Support Forces execute civilians in Omdurman,* 29 April 2025. Ayin Network, *The case of Salha – civilians as the target of war,* 5 May 2025.
[284] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 34 and 115.
[285] In this regard, an 'unlawful arrest' means an arrest without a legal basis or the required legal guarantees.
[286] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[287] Also spelt 'Al-Junaynah'.
[288] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 35, 36 and 115.

In May 2024, the RSF began besieging El Fasher. During the reporting period, the city was almost completely encircled by the RSF. Rather than immediately launching a large-scale assault on the city, the besiegers cut off the supply of humanitarian aid and randomly fired on residential neighbourhoods.[289] By late August 2025, hundreds of thousands of residents were trapped in El Fasher. Most belonged to African population groups such as the Berti, Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa.[290]

The Yale School of Public Health[291] revealed that since 9 May 2025, the RSF had been building an earthen berm around El Fasher that was approximately three metres high. The purpose of the barrier was to prevent food and medicines being smuggled into the city and to prevent people from fleeing the city.[292] By late September 2025, the barrier was 68 kilometres long and only a gap of 3 to 4 kilometres remained.[293] A Sudan expert from the Clingendael Institute[294] spoke of a 'classic starvation strategy combined with high-tech warfare' including drone attacks.[295]

Between 11 and 20 August 2025, the UN recorded 89 civilian deaths resulting from the violence in El Fasher and neighbouring Abu Shouk.[296] This figure included sixteen summary executions. Most of the victims belonged to the Zaghawa community.[297]

On 27 August 2025, the RSF shelled several densely populated districts of El Fasher. According to the SDN, at least 24 people were killed and 55 injured as a result.[298] On 1 September 2025 the RSF again bombarded civilian targets in El Fasher with drones and shells, killing at least 27 civilians. In addition, more than seventy people were injured.[299]

Between 19 September and 12 October 2025, the Yale School of Public Health recorded at least 174 dead and at least 123 injured. They were victims of deliberate attacks by the RSF against civilian targets in El Fasher, including two shelters, two mosques, a hospital and a market. The Yale School of Public Health described these acts as 'war crimes'.[300]

On 2 October 2025, Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that between 19 and 29 September 2025, at least 91 civilians had died in El Fasher as a result of artillery fire and drone and ground attacks by the RSF.[301]

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[289] HRW, *Civilians around Sudan's El Fasher face new attacks,* 11 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[290] FT, *'We watch the graveyards from space', Satellites track Sudanese city under siege,* 30 August 2025.
[291] The Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) of the Yale School of Public Health conducts research into the conflict in Sudan, making use of various types of information, such as satellite images and OSINT. See https://medicine.yale.edu/lab/khoshnood/publications/reports/ for more information on the research findings of the HRL.
[292] Yale School of Public Health, *Human security alert, RSF wall-in El-Fasher's population to prevent escape,* 28 August 2025, pp. 3 and 5. Al Jazeera, *In besieged Sudan city, civilians face death if they try to escape,* 4 September 2025.
[293] Yale School of Public Health, *Residents of El-Fasher attempting to escape as RSF attacks continue,* 26 September 2025, p. 3.
[294] Clingendael is a research institute, think tank and academy in the field of international relations. See https://www.clingendael.org/nl for more information on Clingendael.
[295] RTL Nieuws, *Het vergeten front van de Soedan-oorlog, 'Ze eten veevoer om te overleven',* 4 September 2025.
[296] Also spelt *Abu Shok*.
[297] UN, *UN Human Rights Spokesperson Jeremy Laurence on Sudan attacks,* 22 August 2025.
[298] Al Jazeera, *At least 24 killed in RSF attack on Sudan's el-Fasher: Doctors group,* 28 August 2025. The Independent, *Sudan's Rapid Support Forces shell a besieged Darfur city, killing 24 and wounding 55, group says,* 28 August 2025.
[299] Darfur24, *27 civilians killed as clashes between SAF, RSF renewed in El Fasher, Sudan,* 2 September 2025.
[300] Yale School of Public Health, *Special report, RSF intentionally targeting civilian shelters in El-Fasher,* 14 October 2025, pp. 3, 8 and 9.
[301] OHCHR, *Sudan, Türk calls for urgent action to protect civilians and prevent large-scale atrocities in El Fasher,* 2 October 2025.

Around the same period, the Sudanese Ministry of Health announced that in the preceding three months, more than three hundred civilians had been killed in El Fasher and hundreds injured.[302]

On 22 October 2025, the children's rights organisation Save the Children[303] reported that in October 2025, at least 115 civilians had been killed in El Fasher and 102 injured. The fatalities included 17 children, with 22 children injured. Save the Children based its report on data from the SDN.[304]

Please refer to section 5.6 for the situation of journalists in El Fasher. Please refer to section 7.4 for the food crisis in El Fasher.

Capture of El Fasher by the RSF

On 26 October 2025, the RSF captured El Fasher following a siege lasting a year and a half.[305] Immediately after the capture of the city, the RSF committed gross atrocities, including summary executions, ethnically motivated and sexual violence, and attacks on hospitals, aid workers and journalists.[306] A massacre that stood out in particular took place on 28 October 2025. On that date, the RSF attacked a hospital in El Fasher and killed more than 460 patients and their companions. The RSF also kidnapped six healthcare workers (see section 7.6 for more details of attacks on healthcare facilities).[307]

At the time of writing it was not known how many people had lost their lives during the fall of El Fasher.[308] In early November 2025, the death toll was estimated at at least seven thousand. Most of the dead were civilians.[309] Minni Minawi, the leader of the SLM/MM (see 2.4), claimed that the RSF had killed 27,000 people in El Fasher in a three-day period following the capture of the city.[310] Satellite images showed that the ground in El Fasher and the surrounding area was drenched with blood in some places.[311] In this regard, Tom Fletcher, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, referred to El Fasher as a 'crime scene'.[312]

Following the capture of El Fasher, RSF fighters posted dozens of videos on social media showing them executing unarmed civilians from close range. Brigadier General Fateh Abdullah Idris, better known as 'Abu Lulu'[313] and the 'Butcher of El Fasher', figured prominently in the footage.[314] Abu Lulu boasted of having killed more than two thousand people. In late October 2025, in response to the resulting uproar, he was apprehended by the RSF. Sudanese civilians and human rights

[302] Darfur24, *Army casualties in El Fasher revealed,* 6 October 2025.
[303] See https://www.savethechildren.net/sudan for more information on the work of Save the Children in Sudan.
[304] Save the Children, *In deadly October, nearly one in five civilians killed in El Fasher were children,* 22 October 2025.
[305] Reports also put the duration of the siege of El Fasher at 'over five hundred days' and 'eighteen months'.
[306] Al Jazeera, *Sudan army withdraws from Darfur's el-Fasher, UN warns of atrocities,* 28 October 2025. Ayin Network, *Thousands killed in El Fasher as ceasefire talks collapse,* 28 October 2025. Confidential source, 31 October 2025.
[307] World Health Organization (WHO), *WHO condemns killings of patients and civilians amid escalating violence in El Fasher, Sudan,* 29 October 2025.
[308] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *UN Relief Chief calls Darfur 'epicentre of human suffering',* 17 November 2025.
[309] SWM, *RSF ethnic-based killings in Fasher estimated at 7000,* 3 November 2025.
[310] MEE, *Darfur Governor Minni Minnawi says RSF killed 27,000 Sudanese in el-Fasher,* 21 November 2025.
[311] Yale School of Public Health, *Human security emergency, El-Fasher falls to RSF, Evidence of mass killing,* 27 October 2025, pp. 3 and 8-10. Yale School of Public Health, *Human security emergency, Day two of RSF control, Mass killings continue in El-Fasher,* 28 October 2025, pp. 3-5, 10 and 14.
[312] OCHA, *UN Relief Chief calls Darfur 'epicentre of human suffering',* 17 November 2025.
[313] Also spelt 'Abolulu'.
[314] MEE, *RSF fighters film themselves massacring Sudanese fleeing el-Fasher,* 28 October 2025. HRW, *Mass atrocities in captured Darfur city,* 29 October 2025. Ayin Network, *RSF and the making of Abu Lulu,* 10 November 2025.

defenders dismissed the arrest of Abu Lulu as a 'propaganda stunt'. According to them, Abu Lulu's actions were not isolated acts and the entire RSF force was guilty of mass murder.[315]

According to the IOM, between 26 October and 9 November 2025, 88,892 people were displaced in El Fasher and the surrounding area. Of this number, 75% had already been displaced before the city fell into the hands of the RSF. The great majority of the displaced persons remained in the vicinity of El Fasher, while 21% sought refuge elsewhere.[316]

UN Women, the UN organisation for women's rights and gender equality,[317] concluded that women risked being exposed to sexual violence while fleeing. According to UN Women, there was mounting evidence that the RSF were using sexual violence as a weapon of war in a 'deliberate' and 'systematic' manner.[318] On 7 November 2025, a spokesperson for the civilian arm of the neutral Sudan Liberation Army of Abdel Wahid (SLA/AW) reported that more than 150 women had been raped during their flight from El Fasher to Tawila, a town under the control of SLA/AW.[319] See section 8.3 for more information on gender-related and conflict-related sexual violence.

The capture of El Fasher and the subsequent abuses drew worldwide condemnation. In late October 2025, the UN Security Council (UNSC) condemned the capture of El Fasher by the RSF and the accompanying violence against the civilian population.[320]

In early November 2025, the International Criminal Court (ICC) stated that the RSF may have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in El Fasher. Accordingly, the ICC announced that it would be investigating the killings and rapes in El Fasher.[321]

On 14 November 2025, the UN Human Rights Council likewise condemned the human rights violations in El Fasher and instructed its fact-finding mission (FFM) to investigate them.[322]

On 20 November 2025, the EU condemned the atrocities in El Fasher in the strongest possible terms and stated that the RSF may have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.[323]

In late November 2025, Amnesty concluded that the RSF had committed war crimes against the civilian population in El Fasher. Amnesty based this conclusion on the testimonies of 28 survivors who had managed to safely reach Tawila and Tine.[324] Their statements revealed that the RSF had executed countless unarmed civilians

[315] Sudan Tribune, *RSF arrests commander over field executions in El Fasher,* 30 October 2025. The Guardian, *Sudan's RSF accused of 'PR stunt' after arresting fighters behind civilian killings,* 31 October 2025. Al Jazeera, *Arrest of 'Abu Lulu' does little to distance RSF from Sudan massacre,* 4 November 2025. The Independent, *'The Butcher of El-Fasher' arrested after bragging on TikTok about slaughtering over 2,000 people,* 5 November 2025.
[316] IOM, *Focus flash alert, Al Fasher, North Darfur,* 10 November 2025, pp. 1 and 2.
[317] See https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa/sudan for more information on the activities of UN Women in Sudan.
[318] UN Women, *Briefing remarks on the situation of women and girls in Sudan,* 11 November 2025.
[319] Sudan Tribune, *150 women raped, 1,300 shot fleeing El Fasher, says Darfur monitor,* 7 November 2025.
[320] UN, *Security Council press statement on Sudan,* 30 October 2025.
[321] International Criminal Court, *Statement of the ICC Office of the Prosecutor on the situation in El-Fasher, North Darfur,* 3 November 2025.
[322] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Human Rights Council calls for urgent inquiry into recent alleged violations of international law committed in and around El Fasher, Sudan,* 14 November 2025.
[323] European Council, *Sudan, Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union,* 20 November 2025.
[324] Also known as 'Tina', Tine lies on the border of North Darfur and eastern Chad.

and raped dozens of women and girls. The witnesses had seen hundreds of bodies lying on the ground during their escape.[325]

Attack on and destruction of Zamzam

Zamzam was located fifteen kilometres south of El Fasher. The IDP camp numbered approximately half a million inhabitants. Most were of a Zaghawa background, but other African population groups were also represented in the camp. Since 2004, Zamzam had offered shelter to IDPs who had fled the Janjaweed, the predecessor of the RSF (see 2.3.1).[326]

In April 2025, the RSF attacked the camp. The camp was defended by a small contingent of the Joint Force (see 2.4). This contingent was aided by civilians who had voluntarily taken up arms, the so-called mustanfareen (see 2.2.1 and section 6.2).[327] After three days of fighting, the RSF and their affiliated militias took Zamzam on 13 April 2025, whereupon they subjected its IDP population to violence. The RSF fighters explicitly referred to their victims' black skin and made racist remarks. Videos circulated on social media showing RSF fighters summarily executing persons in civilian clothing. Afterwards, the RSF largely burned the camp down. The attack on Zamzam resulted in an exodus of approximately 400,000 people. Most fled northwards to El Fasher or in a south-westerly direction to Tawila, a town under the control of the SLA/AW.[328]

It remained unknown exactly how many people died in the attack on Zamzam, since at the time of writing, the site of the destroyed camp was under the control of the RSF and not all of the bodies had been recovered. They were lying scattered in houses and fields and on roads. In addition, many residents were still missing.[329] Initially, sources referred to hundreds of deaths.[330] In early August 2025, the British daily *The Guardian* made it clear that this death toll needed to be revised upwards. Based on intelligence and witness statements, the newspaper came to the conclusion that more than 1,500 civilians had died in the attack.[331]

Abu Shouk under fire

During the siege of El Fasher, Abu Shouk also came under fire.[332] This densely populated IDP camp at the northern edge of El Fasher numbered at least 200,000 inhabitants in August 2025. Most of them belonged to African population groups

[325] Amnesty International, *El Fasher survivors tell of deliberate RSF killings and sexual violence – new testimony,* 25 November 2025.
[326] Sudan Research, Analysis and Advocacy, *Zamzam, The final catastrophe,* 15 April 2025. Sudan Research, Analysis and Advocacy, *Zamzam after the catastrophe, News from Team Zamzam,* 27 April 2025. The Independent, *'The Janjaweed are coming', Sudanese recount atrocities in RSF attack on a Darfur camp*, 3 May 2025. The Guardian, *'They slaughtered us like animals', The inside story of how one of the biggest atrocities of the Sudan war unfolded in Zamzam,* 7 August 2025.
[327] This group of civilians included Hanadi Al-Nour Dawood, a 22-year-old nurse and activist. She was armed with a kitchen knife. Her self-defence unit reportedly repelled one wave of attacks. The assault on Zamzam cost Dawood her life. The Guardian, *'They slaughtered us like animals',* 7 August 2025.
[328] Sudan Research, Analysis and Advocacy, *Zamzam,* 15 April 2025. CIR, *Fires, extreme violence, and mass displacement following RSF attack on Zamzam camp, North Darfur,* 17 April 2025. The Guardian, *'They were chanting as they killed people in their homes', Survivors describe attack on Sudan's Zamzam camp,* 18 April 2025. Confidential source, 18 April 2025. Confidential source, 22 and 23 April 2025. Sudan Research, Analysis and Advocacy, *Zamzam after the catastrophe,* 27 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. The Independent, *'The Janjaweed are coming'*, 3 May 2025. The Guardian, *'They slaughtered us like animals',* 7 August 2025.
[329] The Guardian, *Assault on Sudan's Zamzam refugee camp may have killed more than 1,500 civilians*, 7 August 2025.
[330] SWM, *Hundreds massacred in militia rampage at camps in North Darfur,* 13 April 2025. Confidential source, 15 April 2025.
[331] The Guardian, *Assault on Sudan's Zamzam refugee camp may have killed more than 1,500 civilians*, 7 August 2025.
[332] The New Humanitarian (TNH), *Inside the battle for El Fasher, "Innocent lives are lost every day",* 27 November 2024.

such as the Zaghawa and Fur. They had settled there in the early 21st century after being driven from their homes by the Janjaweed, the predecessor of the RSF (see 2.3.1).[333]

The RSF bombarded Abu Shouk with artillery fire and drones on an almost daily basis, forcing the inhabitants to dig underground shelters.[334] Such shelters were known as *khanadiq* (singular: *khandaq*).[335]

According to Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the RSF carried out at least sixteen attacks on Abu Shouk between January and June 2025, leaving at least 212 people dead and 111 injured.[336]

On 11 August 2025, the RSF carried out an attack on Abu Shouk with over forty light vehicles. According to a local relief committee, more than forty civilians died in the attack, while at least nineteen were injured. Some civilians were executed; others were killed by stray bullets. Ultimately, the Joint Force managed to repel the RSF following hours of fighting.[337] Türk condemned the RSF's violence against the civilian population in El Fasher and Abu Shouk.[338]

On 16 August 2025, the RSF subjected a market in Abu Shouk to artillery fire. According to the SDN, at least 31 people were killed and 13 injured as a result. The fatalities included an aid worker, seven children and a pregnant woman.[339] The UN expressed its concern about the ongoing violence against the civilian population in Abu Shouk.[340]

By mid-September 2025, the RSF had penetrated so far into Abu Shouk that approximately ninety percent of the inhabitants had fled the camp. Most of the displaced persons had fled to other parts of El Fasher or to the area controlled by the SLA/AW in the centre of Darfur.[341] On 18 September 2025, the Yale School of Public Health concluded that the RSF were able to move unhindered through Abu Shouk and that the camp was 'possibly' in the hands of the paramilitaries. The research institute based this conclusion on satellite images from the period between 15 and 18 September 2025.[342]

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[333] Yale School of Public Health, *Emergency alert, RSF massacre in Abu Shouk IDP Camp corroborated,* 11 August 2025, p. 3. SWM, *RSF attack on Abu Shouk kills dozens,* 13 August 2025.
[334] Sudan Tribune, *14 civilians killed in RSF shelling of Abu Shouk market, activists say,* 18 May 2025. Sudan Tribune, *RSF shelling kills at least 20 at displacement camp in Sudan's Darfur,* 5 June 2025. Sudan Tribune, *More than 40 displaced were killed in Sudan's El Fasher, activists say,* 11 August 2025.
[335] Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR), *Every day bombs, hunger, and loss of life, Accounts of forgotten victims in North Darfur,* September 2025, p. 10. *Khandaq* can also refer to a ditch, trench or underground tunnel for military purposes.
[336] UN, *'Only hunger and bombs' for besieged civilians in Sudan's El Fasher,* 13 August 2025.
[337] Sudan Tribune, *More than 40 displaced were killed in Sudan's El Fasher,* 11 August 2025. Yale School of Public Health, *Emergency alert,* 11 August 2025, pp. 3 and 5. Al Jazeera, *Sudanese RSF fighters kill more than 40 people in Darfur camp,* 12 August 2025. BBC, *Dozens killed in attack on Sudan camp for people who had fled war,* 12 August 2025. Darfur24, *UN announces killing of 40 civilians during the recent clashes in El Fasher,* 12 August 2025. The Independent, *Sudan's Rapid Support Forces kill 40 people in North Darfur displacement camp attack,* 12 August 2025. SWM, *RSF attack on Abu Shouk kills dozens,* 13 August 2025.
[338] OHCHR, *Sudan, Türk outraged after RSF kills at least 57 civilians in El Fasher and Abu Shouk IDP camp,* 13 August 2025.
[339] Yale School of Public Health, *Human security incident, Confirmed bombardment at Naivasha Market in Abu Shouk IDP Camp,* 18 August 2025, p. 3.
[340] OCHA, *Today's top news, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan, Ukraine,* 18 August 2025.
[341] Sudan Tribune, *90% of Abu Shouk camp residents flee El Fasher amid RSF advances,* 15 September 2025. Darfur24, *IDPs flee Abu Shouk Camp amid escalating violence in El Fasher,* 15 September 2025.
[342] Yale School of Public Health, *Special report, El-Fasher falling, RSF controls Abu Shouk IDP Camp,* 18 September 2025, pp. 3-5.

Other violence in North Darfur

The RSF's violence in North Darfur was not limited to El Fasher, Zamzam and Abu Shouk. The RSF had already burned down villages inhabited by African population groups in the preceding reporting period.[343] This pattern continued during the reporting period. For instance, based on satellite images, the Yale School of Public Health ascertained that between 2 and 12 October 2024, the RSF had burned down at least fourteen villages in the vicinity of Kutum, a town in North Darfur. These villages were primarily inhabited by Zaghawa. According to local media, at least fifty people died in the aforementioned attacks.[344]

The same research institute concluded on the basis of satellite images that between 12 October and 6 November 2024, the RSF had burned down at least 26 villages in the area around Kutum. Again, the villages in question were predominantly inhabited by Zaghawa. On 7 November 2024, the Yale School of Public Health revealed that since April 2023, more than 110 villages had been burned down in the whole of Darfur. Based on the above findings, the Yale School of Public Health concluded that the Zaghawa were potentially being subjected to 'systematic ethnic targeting'.[345]

The Afrophobic violence of the RSF was not limited to the Zaghawa. In August 2025, a video purportedly made in North Darfur went viral on social media. The video showed a man in civilian clothing, a restaurant owner by occupation, being summarily executed by RSF commander Abu Lulu. In the footage, Abu Lulu asked the man which population group he belonged to. After he responded that he was a Berti, Abu Lulu shot him dead with his handgun.[346] The Berti[347] have historically lived to the north-east of El Fasher. They are one of the few African population groups that exclusively speak Arabic.[348]

Air strikes in Darfur

During the reporting period, the SAF made extensive use of the air force in Darfur. For example, ACLED recorded fifty air strikes in the whole of Darfur between 1 August and 6 September 2024.[349] ACLED did not provide further detail on how many air strikes took place in each state of Darfur.

The SAF made no effort to protect the civilian population. The SAF regularly bombed busy markets in RSF territory in North Darfur, in particular the areas of El Koma[350] and Mellit (see also 2.2.2).[351] The town of El Koma had been under RSF control since midway through 2023 and was primarily inhabited by the Ziyadiya, an Arab population group. As such, the SAF regarded the town as pro-RSF.[352] According to local leaders, the SAF had carried out more than 150 air strikes on El Koma between

[343] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 35.
[344] Yale School of Public Health, *Fourteen arson attacks on villages, North Darfur, 2-12 October 2024,* published on 16 October 2024, pp. 3 and 4.
[345] Yale School of Public Health, *Twenty-six arson attacks on villages in Kutum Locality, North Darfur, 12 October – 6 November 2024,* published on 7 November 2024, pp. 3-5.
[346] Radio Dabanga, *Video of 'summary execution of civilian by RSF' in North Darfur sparks outrage,* 18 August 2025. Yale School of Public Health, *Human security incident,* 18 August 2025, p. 3. Confidential source, 20 August 2025. Confidential source, 23 August 2025. Al Jazeera, *Arrest of 'Abu Lulu' does little to distance RSF from Sudan massacre,* 4 November 2025.
[347] Also spelt 'Birte'.
[348] Confidential source, 20 August 2025.
[349] ACLED, *Artillery shelling and airstrikes surge in Sudan,* 16 September 2024, pp. 5 and 6.
[350] Also spelt 'Koma', 'Al-Koma' and 'Al-Kuma'.
[351] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[352] Sudans Post, *Dozens killed as Sudan rivals strike civilian areas in North Darfur,* 12 October 2025. SWM, *Dozens killed in RSF and army strikes in North Darfur,* 13 October 2025.

April 2023 and 11 October.[353] The examples below are provided purely for illustrative purposes and should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 4 October 2024, the SAF air force bombed El Koma and Mellit. In both cases, they targeted markets. In El Koma, there were at least 45 civilian deaths and more than 200 injured. In Mellit, at least 23 people were killed.[354] On 24 March 2025, the SAF bombed a busy market at Tora,[355] a town north-west of El Fasher. According to local activists, at least 54 people were killed. A community leader reported that the death toll was at least 61. Commentators described the air strike on the market in Tora as a 'possible war crime'.[356] On 1 June 2025, the SAF again bombed a busy market in El Koma. A local relief committee reported at least 89 deaths.[357] On 2 September 2025, an SAF drone attack killed thirteen people at a busy market in Mellit. In addition, seven people were injured.[358] On 11 October 2025, the SAF carried out a drone attack on El Koma. According to local leaders, at least sixteen to twenty civilians were killed.[359]

Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, was known as an RSF stronghold and served as the seat of the parallel government led by the RSF (see 1.3.2). During the reporting period, satellite images revealed that the RSF were receiving a continuous supply of modern weapons, in particular Chinese type CH-95 drones, via the international airport at Nyala (see also 2.3.2).[360]

On 3 May 2025, the SAF attacked Nyala airport with Turkish-made drones. The drone attack destroyed a cargo aircraft and killed a number of people, including eighteen foreigners. Some of the dead had Emirati nationality. The co-pilots of the destroyed aircraft, a South Korean and a Kenyan, were allegedly also killed. In response, a series of drone attacks followed on Port Sudan (see 2.3.2).[361]

On 6 August 2025, the SAF reported that their air force had destroyed an Emirati aircraft at Nyala airport. Allegedly, there were Colombian mercenaries on board. Reportedly, at least forty mercenaries were killed during the action.[362] The Emirati authorities denied that an Emirati aircraft with mercenaries on board had been destroyed, and dismissed the SAF report as 'disinformation'.[363] The RSF also denied that an aircraft with Colombian mercenaries on board had been destroyed.[364] See subsection 2.3.1 for more information on the deployment of Colombian mercenaries.

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[353] Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese army drone strike kills 16 civilians in North Darfur,* 11 October 2025.
[354] SWM, *Wave of SAF airstrikes in North Darfur kills dozens of civilians,* 6 October 2024.
[355] Also spelt 'Toura'.
[356] Al Jazeera, *Dozens killed in strike on market in Sudan's North Darfur,* 25 March 2025. DNHR, *Sudanese Army airstrike on Tora Market kills at least 61 and injures over 100,* 25 March 2025. The New York Times, *Sudan military bombing kills dozens in attack on market in Darfur,* 25 March 2025.
[357] Sudan Tribune, *Air strike on North Darfur market kills dozens,* 1 June 2025. Radio Dabanga, *At least 89 killed in Sudanese army airstrike on North Darfur town,* 2 June 2025. Sudans Post, *SAF airstrike kills and injures dozens of civilians in North Darfur,* 2 June 2025. SWM, *Airstrike kills dozens in Darfur market,* 3 June 2025.
[358] Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese army drone strike kills 13 in North Darfur market*, 2 September 2025.
[359] Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese army drone strike kills 16 civilians in North Darfur, local leaders say,* 11 October 2025. Sudans Post, *Dozens killed as Sudan rivals strike civilian areas in North Darfur,* 12 October 2025. Radio Dabanga, *At least 20 civilians killed in North Darfur air raid by SAF,* 13 October 2025. SWM, *Dozens killed in RSF and army strikes in North Darfur,* 13 October 2025.
[360] Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), *Satellitenbilder enthüllen neue Waffen der mächtigen paramilitärischen Miliz im Sudan,* 7 March 2025.
[361] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan army bombs Nyala airport after suspected RSF supply flight,* 3 May 2025. Darfur24, *18 foreigners killed in Nyala airport attack,* 6 May 2025. MEE, *Sudan's shadow war, Drone strikes reveal escalating tensions between UAE and Turkey,* 15 May 2025.
[362] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's army says it destroyed UAE plane carrying mercenaries in Nyala,* 6 August 2025. Al Jazeera, *Sudan military destroyed UAE plane carrying Colombian mercenaries: State TV,* 7 August 2025. NOS, *Sudanese regeringsleger 'vernietigt vliegtuig met 40 huurlingen',* 7 August 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan army: '40+ Colombian mercenaries killed as RSF-bound Emirati aircraft destroyed in Nyala',* 7 August 2025.
[363] France 24, *UAE rejects Sudan claim it destroyed Emirati plane full of mercenaries,* published on 7 August 2025, updated on 8 August 2025.
[364] Radio Dabanga, *Darfur, RSF deny Sudan army claims of Nyala Airport attack 'killing Colombian mercenaries',* 10 August 2025.

On 10 September 2025 a drone, presumably belonging to the SAF, hit a government building in Nyala. It was reported that eight people died in the attack – two employees of the civilian RSF administration, five security staff and a bootblack. In addition, several people were injured.[365]

Intercommunal violence and banditry in the RSF part of Darfur

There was no large-scale conflict-related violence with fluctuating front lines in Central, East, West or South Darfur during the reporting period. However, these four Darfur states did witness intercommunal violence[366] and banditry. Some of the armed individuals were affiliated with the RSF, while others operated as independent gangs.[367]

The phenomenon of intercommunal violence and banditry was not new in Darfur. In a context of drought, famine, arms proliferation and scarcity of water sources and pastures, Darfur has been the scene of cattle-rustling, robberies, shootings and murders for some time. 'Armed bandits' were known in the Darfuri context as *nahab*.[368]

The precise scale of intercommunal violence and banditry in Darfur remained unclear. According to one source, bandits and RSF fighters were responsible for 'daily' security incidents, such as kidnappings for ransom and looting.[369]

The security incidents described below give an impression of the security situation in the parts of Darfur that were spared large-scale conflict-related violence with fluctuating front lines. These areas of Darfur were nominally under the control of the RSF. The following incidents are described solely for illustrative purposes and should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 12 April 2025, a man belonging to the Fur population group was riding a donkey north of Nertiti, a town in Central Darfur, from the market to his farm. Two armed men in civilian clothing rode past him on a motorcycle and opened fire on him. The man sustained a serious injury to his left eye. The attackers were seemingly of Arabic appearance,[370] but reports of the incident did not explicitly state whether it was in fact ethnically motivated. It should be noted that during the preceding reporting period, there had been violence by Arabs against the Fur in Central Darfur.[371]

On 15 May 2025, eight people armed with sticks attacked two brothers in a *wadi*[372] north-west of Nertiti. The two brothers belonged to the Fur community and the attackers appeared to be nomads. In the Darfuri context, a nomadic lifestyle is generally associated with Arab population groups. Both brothers were seriously injured and had to be hospitalised.[373] Reports of the incident did not explicitly state whether it was in fact ethnically motivated.

[365] Darfur24, *Nyala drone strike leaves eight dead, civil administration chief's guards among victims,* 11 September 2025.
[366] In this COI Report, the term 'intercommunal violence' refers to an armed conflict between one or more communities that does not constitute an integral part of the war between the SAF and the RSF.
[367] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[368] Baaijens, *Woestijnnomaden*, published in 2003, pp. 12, 44, 68, 115, 157, 161-163, 206, 231, 232 and 246. Hari, *De tolk,* published in 2008, pp. 200 and 202. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 49 and 52. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[369] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[370] DNHR, *Field incident report, Armed attack on civilian in Garni area, north of Nertiti, Central Darfur,* 14 April 2025.
[371] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 39.
[372] A wadi is a riverbed where water occasionally flows. Baaijens, *Woestijnnomaden*, published in 2003, p. 253.
[373] DNHR, *Violent assault on Furawi tribe members in Wadi Markno – linked to historical tribal dispute,* 17 May 2025.

On 30 September 2025, a farmer was returning from the farm to his house near Zalingei, the capital of Central Darfur. Two masked men in RSF uniform on a motorcycle demanded his mobile phone. When it transpired that the farmer did not have a phone on his person, the attackers shot him. The man died of his injuries the following morning.[374]

On 13 October 2025, the RSF and affiliated militias attacked African farmers in Central Darfur. Mounted on camels, they rode through fields, damaging crops and threatening the farming communities.[375] Reports did not reveal which African population group the farmers belonged to or whether there had been any casualties.

On 18 November 2025, an argument broke out between RSF fighters in a shop in Zalingei. The conflict, which stemmed from a dispute about money, escalated into a shooting incident, in which the shopkeeper was killed.[376]

Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, was the scene of robberies, shootings and kidnappings during the reporting period. A Sudan expert from Clingendael described Nyala as a 'lawless city'.[377] Several illustrative incidents are detailed below. This should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 5 May 2025, armed men attacked an IDP camp in Nyala, killing the leader of the camp, his son and another inhabitant.[378]

On 6 August 2025, three RSF fighters opened fire with automatic weapons on four IDPs who were on their way from Nyala to an IDP camp. Three of the IDPs were injured and one was killed. The reason why the RSF fighters had opened fire was unclear.[379]

On 18 October 2025, an argument broke out between an RSF fighter and a young man in Nyala, culminating in the RSF fighter detonating a hand grenade. Four people were killed, including the RSF fighter himself, and several were injured.[380]

On 4 October 2025, a violent confrontation took place between two subgroups of the Habbaniya, an Arab population group.[381] The conflict centred on a woman. An attempt by the RSF to intervene exacerbated the situation and nine people lost their lives, including at least three civilians. In addition, eighteen people were injured.[382]

On 20 October 2025, a confrontation took place in South Darfur between two subgroups of the Beni Halba, another Arab population group.[383] The immediate cause of the violence, which left two dead and more than eighteen injured, was the theft of livestock.[384] On 23 October 2025, it was reported that the leaders of the two groups had concluded a reconciliation agreement.[385]

[374] DNHR, *Extrajudicial killing incident in Bendesi, Central Darfur, Sudan,* 2 October 2025.
[375] DNHR, *RSF and affiliated militias attack civilian's farmlands in Zalingei, Central Darfur,* 21 October 2025.
[376] Darfur24, *Shopkeeper killed in armed clash inside Zalingi market,* 20 November 2025.
[377] NOS, *Ook met twee regeringen woekert de humanitaire crisis in Sudan voort,* 28 July 2025.
[378] Radio Dabanga, *Displacement camp leader and family members shot dead in South Darfur,* 5 May 2025.
[379] ACJPS, *South Darfur, One IDP killed and three others injured during an attack by RSF fighters in Nyala,* 14 August 2025.
[380] Darfur24, *Four killed in grenade explosion in Nyala, South Darfur,* 21 October 2025.
[381] In the preceding reporting period, the Habbaniya came into conflict with the Salamat, also an Arab community, in South Darfur. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 40.
[382] Darfur24, *Nine dead, 18 injured in tribal clashes in South Darfur,* 3 October 2025.
[383] The groups in question were the Fiyarin and the Awlad Wadi (also spelt 'Ouled Wadi').
[384] Darfur24, *Two killed, 18 injured in tribal clashes in South Darfur,* 21 October 2025.
[385] Darfur24, *Beni Halba tribe reaches reconciliation agreement in South Darfur,* 23 October 2025.

In the same month, armed herders shot dead at least three displaced women near Kalma, an IDP camp in South Darfur. The women were working the land outside the camp. The incident was part of a broader pattern of violence against displaced women. Between August and early October 2025, the camp authorities in Kalma documented approximately 50 incidents of violence against displaced women, including 15 rapes and 35 cases of physical violence.[386] See section 8.3 for more information on sexual and gender-related violence against women.

On 12 November 2025, *Darfur24*, an independent news platform,[387] reported that armed herders had driven their livestock through arable land north of Nyala. According to a farmer, the RSF and police did not intervene.[388] The news report did not state which population groups the herders and the affected farmers belonged to. In the Darfuri context, herders and farmers are generally associated with Arab and African population groups, respectively.

2.5.9 South Kordofan

In the preceding reporting period, the SAF, RSF and SPLM-N were fighting for control of South Kordofan.[389] In the current reporting period, the RSF and SPLM-N, now united in the Taasis alliance (see 1.3.2), faced the SAF in South Kordofan. The two sides experienced fluctuating fortunes. For instance, the town of El Dibeibat, strategically located at a crossroads between North, South and West Kordofan, changed hands several times.[390] At first, El Dibeibat was under the control of the RSF, then fell into the hands of the SAF, but after heavy fighting was retaken by the RSF.[391] It was not clear from media reports how many victims had died during the fighting for the town.

At the time of writing, Kadugli and Dilling, the two largest cities in South Kordofan,[392] were under the control of the SAF.[393] According to a source, the SPLM-N had advanced to within five to fifteen kilometres of both cities.[394]

In the preceding reporting period, ethnically motivated violence took place at Dilling between the Hawazma, an Arab population group, and the Nuba, a collection of African communities.[395] As far as could be ascertained, there was no violence with an ethnic dimension between the Hawazma and the Nuba during the current reporting period.[396]

2.5.10 *Blue Nile*

In the preceding reporting period, Blue Nile did not witness heavy fighting.[397] A source indicated that during the current reporting period, no large-scale fighting took place in Blue Nile, as it did in other states and areas, for example El Gezira

[386] Darfur24, *Three displaced women killed as violence against women escalates in South Darfur,* 13 October 2025.
[387] See https://www.darfur24.com/en/about-us/ for more information on *Darfur24*.
[388] Darfur24, *Farmers complain of encroachment by herders in South Darfur,* 12 November 2025.
[389]Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 40 and 41.
[390] Also spelt 'El Dabibat' and 'Debeibat'. Hamdok, the former prime minister of Sudan and the current leader of the Somoud civilian coalition, was born in El Dibeibat.
[391] Darfur24, *RSF recapture Debeibat, South Kordofan,* 29 May 2025. Radio Dabanga, *'RSF reclaims towns in Kordofan', Conflict and displacement surge across Sudan,* 29 May 2025. SWM, *RSF counterattacks and reverses Sudan army's latest gains in Kordofan,* 30 May 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[392] Dilling is also spelt 'Delling'.
[393] Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[394] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[395] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 41.
[396] Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[397] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 42.

(see 2.5.4), Khartoum (see 2.5.7), North Darfur (see 2.5.8) and the greater Kordofan region (see 2.5.2 and 2.5.6).[398]

Nevertheless, violent confrontations did take place in Blue Nile between the SAF on the one hand and the RSF and the SPLM-N on the other. Both sides experienced fluctuating fortunes.[399] At the time of writing, Blue Nile was largely under the control of the SAF. The south, which borders South Sudan and Ethiopia, was in the hands of the SPLM-N and the RSF.[400]

At the start of the preceding reporting period, inter-communal violence took place in Blue Nile between several communities, including the Hamaj/Funj and the Hausa.[401] As far as could be ascertained, there were no reports of intercommunal violence between the Funj and the Hausa in Blue Nile during the current reporting period.[402]

2.5.11 Northern State

On 11 June 2025, the RSF achieved a significant victory in Northern State. On that date, they captured the strategic 'tripoint' triangle border region between Sudan, Libya and Egypt[403] from the SAF and the Joint Force. This area was rich in gold reserves and provided a corridor for extremist groups, arms, gold and drugs smugglers, and human traffickers. In this regard, this triangle between Sudan, Libya and Egypt was described as a 'lawless area', where 'total anarchy' prevailed.[404]

From this region, the RSF had the ability to advance into both the north of Sudan and (North) Darfur. It was also anticipated that the troops of the Libyan warlord Haftar would be more easily able to resupply the RSF via this region. The Sudanese authorities accused Haftar of supporting the RSF with his troops in the fighting for the tripoint (see also 1.6.5). Haftar denied this allegation.[405] It was not clear from media reports how many people had died during the fighting for the border region between Sudan, Libya and Egypt.

2.5.12 Abyei

Abyei is an oil-rich area on the border between Sudan and South Sudan. At the time of South Sudan's independence in 2011, the two countries failed to reach agreement on this border region. Under international pressure, Abyei was placed under joint administration. In the future, the status of Abyei is to be decided through a referendum of the local population. Until then, a UN peacekeeping force is seeking to maintain peace and security in Abyei. This UN mission is known as the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)[406] and consists of four thousand

[398] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[399] SWM, *Map: RSF incursion into Blue Nile State,* 5 August 2024. Sudan Tribune, *Fighting erupts in Sudan's Blue Nile and White Nile states,* 8 December 2024. SWM, *SAF suffers setback in Blue Nile offensive,* 4 January 2025.
[400] Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[401] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 42. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's army says it seized positions in Blue Nile state,* 25 June 2025.
[402] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[403] The triangle between Sudan, Libya and Egypt is known as the *Uwaynat Triangle*.
[404] Al Jazeera, *Sudan's paramilitary RSF say they seized key zone bordering Egypt, Libya,* 11 June 2025. Al-Monitor, *Sudan army loses border control to RSF after clashes with Libya's Haftar,* 11 June 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's Northern state vows to confront incursion by Haftar's Libyan forces,* 12 June 2025. SWM, *RSF seizes Libya-Sudan border zone,* 12 June 2025. The Independent, *Sudan's paramilitaries seize a key area along with the border with Libya and Egypt,* 12 June 2025. Ayin Network, *Fears and deals, Inside the Sudan-Egypt-Libya border triangle,* 7 August 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025. MEE, *How Sudan and Libya's triangle border region became a hotbed of crime and war,* 15 August 2025.
[405] Al-Monitor, *Sudan army loses border control to RSF after clashes with Libya's Haftar,* 11 June 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's Northern state vows to confront incursion by Haftar's Libyan forces,* 12 June 2025. SWM, *RSF seizes Libya-Sudan border zone,* 12 June 2025. The Independent, *Sudan's paramilitaries seize a key area along with the border with Libya and Egypt,* 12 June 2025. International Crisis Group (ICG), *Capture of tri-border area marks another twist in Sudan's civil war,* 20 June 2025.
[406] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 44.

police officers and soldiers.[407] On 14 November 2025, the UNSC decided to extend the mission of the UNISFA by one year.[408]

During the preceding reporting period, the security situation in Abyei proved fragile, and intercommunal violence took place, especially between the Ngok Dinka and the Twic Dinka. The two communities are subgroups of the Dinka, an African population group that speaks a Nilo-Saharan language.[409]

During the reporting period, various security incidents took place in Abyei. For example, in April 2025 armed Twic Dinka youths attacked Abyei. At least ten people died and four were injured. The fatalities included four charcoal makers.[410]

On 23 July 2025, two armed men from the Misseriya, an Arab nomad community, attacked a police station in Abyei, shooting dead two police officers and injuring two bystanders. After the attackers had freed a prisoner from the cell, they disappeared into the bush. The freed prisoner was also a member of the Misseriya.[411]

In August 2025, livestock raids were carried out across Abyei, resulting in the theft of over two hundred cattle. The rustlers were believed to be armed young men of the Nuer, an African population group that speaks a Nilo-Saharan language. One cattle thief and four other people died in the raids, including a teacher. In addition, three people were injured.[412]

On 6 October 2025, fighting raged in Abyei between the South Sudanese government army and the SPLM-IO, a South Sudanese opposition group (see also 1.6.6).[413] Reportedly, seventeen soldiers and civilians were killed. In addition, five people were injured.[414]

2.6 Reactions of international actors to the violence

2.6.1 Introduction

During the reporting period, various international actors spoke out about the nature of the violence in Sudan. The most noteworthy reactions to the violence from international actors are discussed below in chronological order. In this connection, the term 'international actor' refers to state, non-state and multilateral actors.

2.6.2 United States (US)

On 7 January 2025, Antony Blinken, then US Secretary of State, asserted that Hemedti and his RSF had committed genocide. Blinken stated that the RSF had killed boys and men on ethnic grounds and subjected girls and women to sexual violence based on their ethnic background. Blinken's press statement did not explicitly mention which population group (or groups) the genocide was directed at, but the international media assumed that he was referring to the violence against

[407] Al Jazeera, *UN extends peacekeeping mission in disputed Abyei region for another year,* 15 November 2025.
[408] UN, *Security Council extends mandate of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, Adopting resolution 2802 (2025),* 14 November 2025.
[409] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 44 and 45.
[410] Sudans Post, *9 killed, 4 wounded in separate attacks in Abyei,* 6 April 2025.
[411] Radio Tamazuj, *2 killed as Misseriya nomads attack Abyei police post,* 24 July 2025.
[412] Radio Tamazuj, *5 killed, 3 wounded in Abyei cattle raids,* 15 August 2025.
[413] Sudans Post, *Unified VIP protection forces clash in Abyei,* 7 October 2025.
[414] Radio Tamazuj, *Warrap and Abyei, Territorial misrepresentation, truth about SPLA-IO and SSPDF clashes in Twic County,* 10 October 2025.

the Masalit in West Darfur in 2023. As a result, the US adopted sanctions against Hemedti and seven companies based in the UAE that were owned by the RSF.[415]

On 16 January 2025, Blinken also imposed sanctions against Burhan, the commander of the SAF, citing the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure by the SAF (see also 2.2.2). He also asserted that the SAF had deliberately withheld food as a tactic of war and had intentionally obstructed the provision of humanitarian aid (see also 7.5). The US also blamed Burhan for refusing to participate in the peace talks in Switzerland in August 2024 (see 1.4).[416]

On 22 May 2025, the US announced that it would be imposing additional sanctions against Sudan because the SAF had used chemical weapons in 2024. One of the sanctions involved restrictions on export to Sudan. In the press statement by the US State Department, there was no mention of which type of chemical weapon the SAF had used, or of the location (or locations) at which this had taken place or of how many casualties there had been as a result. Previously, *The New York Times* had reported that the SAF had used chlorine gas at least twice in remote areas of Sudan.[417] See section 2.2.2 for more information on the use of chemical weapons by the SAF.

On 12 September 2025, the US Treasury Department imposed sanctions against Jibril Ibrahim and the BBMB. It stated that it was doing so in order to limit Islamist influence in Sudan. Ibrahim was not only the leader of the JEM (see 2.4), he also performed the role of Finance Minister. In that capacity, he had strengthened political and economic ties with Iran, for which he attracted censure from the US. The BBMB militia was subjected to sanctions because it had received training and weapons from Iran and was guilty of unlawful arrests, torture and summary executions (see also 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), according to the US.[418] See subsection 1.6.7 for more information on the bilateral relations between Sudan and Iran.

2.6.3 Doctors without Borders (abbreviated internationally as MSF)

In early July 2025, the international humanitarian organisation Doctors without Borders (MSF)[419] published a report on the abuses committed in El Fasher and Zamzam (see 2.5.8). In its report, MSF concluded that the RSF and their allies had 'systematically' targeted African population groups, in particular the Zaghawa. In doing so, the perpetrators had subjected their victims to shootings, looting, mass murder, sexual violence and kidnappings. In addition, the RSF and their affiliated militias had denied their victims food, water and healthcare. They had also burned down the homes and markets of those they had targeted.[420]

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[415] MEE, *US says 'genocide' taking place in Sudan as it sanctions RSF chief Hemeti,* 7 January 2025. SWM, *U.S. sanctions RSF leader and shell companies in Emirates,* 7 January 2025. USDoS, *Genocide determination in Sudan and imposing accountability measures*, 7 January 2025. BBC, *US accuses RSF of Sudan genocide and sanctions its leader,* 8 January 2025. Al Jazeera, *US accuses RSF of genocide, hurting the group's drive for legitimacy,* 10 January 2025. Confidential source, 7 February 2025.

[416] USDoS, *Sanctioning Sudanese Armed Forces leader and weapons supplier,* 16 January 2025. BBC, *US sanctions Sudan army chief Burhan over civilian deaths,* 17 January 2025. Confidential source, 7 February 2025.

[417] USDoS, *Imposing measures on Sudan for its use of chemical weapons,* 22 May 2025. Al Jazeera, *US sanctions Sudan after ruling chemical weapons used during civil war,* 23 May 2025. BBC, *US says Sudan used chemical weapons in war as it issues new sanctions,* 23 May 2025. NOS, *VS beschuldigt Sudan van gebruik chemische wapens en komt met sancties,* 23 May 2025. The New York Times, *U.S. to impose sanctions on Sudan over use of chemical weapons,* 23 May 2025.

[418] USDoS, *Sanctioning Sudanese armed group leader and Islamist militia with links to Iran,* 12 September 2025. U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Treasury sanctions Sudanese Islamist actors to counter regional instability and support for Iran,* 12 September 2025. Africa Intelligence, *Burhan's Islamist allies endanger rapprochement with US,* 22 September 2025.

[419] Known in French as *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF). See https://www.msf.org/sudan for more information on the activities of MSF in Sudan.

[420] MSF, *Besieged, attacked, starved, Mass atrocities in El Fasher and Zamzam, Sudan,* 3 July 2025, pp. 5, 6, 8, 16 and 40.

MSF based the above conclusions on both qualitative and quantitative research. As part of its research, the international aid organisation had interviewed more than eighty displaced persons from El Fasher and Zamzam. Those interviews took place in North Darfur and eastern Chad.[421]

The testimonies of interviewees revealed that the RSF and their allies had made explicit reference to their victims' black skin colour or ethnicity, using Afrophobic language and variously referring to the African Darfuris as *falangayat* ('servants')[422] and 'monkeys'. During their campaign of violence in El Fasher and the surrounding areas, RSF fighters 'systematically' questioned civilians about their ethnicity, according to MSF. The Zaghawa in particular were targeted, according to those interviewed. They were beaten and, in the most serious cases, killed. It was not clear from the interviewees' statements in which cases Zaghawa were beaten and in which cases they were killed. The testimonies collected by MSF did reveal that the RSF and their affiliated militias explicitly targeted the Zaghawa because the Joint Force predominantly consisted of Zaghawa. The perpetrators stated their intention of 'cleansing' the whole of El Fasher of Zaghawa.[423] The MSF report made no mention of numbers of victims of targeted violence by the RSF against the Zaghawa.

2.6.4 International Criminal Court (ICC)

Nazhat Shameem Khan, Deputy Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), issued a statement on 11 July 2025. In the statement, she reported that there was reason to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed in Darfur and that the aforementioned abuses were continuing. Khan based this conclusion on a months-long investigation, for which the ICC had gathered more than seven thousand pieces of evidence. During the investigation, the ICC had conducted interviews and consulted with Sudanese refugees in Chad, the Sudanese authorities, the UN, civil society organisations in Sudan and Darfuris in the diaspora.[424]

It was not clear from Khan's statement whether the investigation was limited to a particular reporting period. Nor did the deputy prosecutor specify against which communities in Darfur war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed. From the context of her statement, it was clear that her conclusions pertained primarily to the violence by the RSF and their affiliated militias in West Darfur and North Darfur, in particular the capital, El Fasher, and the nearby displacement camps of Zamzam and Abu Shouk (see 2.5.8).[425]

2.6.5 European Union (EU)

During the reporting period, the European Union (EU) imposed sanctions against persons and entities in relation to the conflict in Sudan.[426]

[421] MSF, *Besieged, attacked, starved,* 3 July 2025, p. 7.
[422] Singular: *falangay*.
[423] MSF, *Besieged, attacked, starved,* 3 July 2025, pp. 23 and 24.
[424] International Criminal Court, *Statement of Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan to the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Darfur, pursuant to Resolution 1593 (2005),* 11 July 2025. Confidential source, 16 July 2025.
[425] International Criminal Court, *Statement of Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan to the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Darfur,* 11 July 2025. Confidential source, 16 July 2025.
[426] The EU Sanctions Map provides an overview of the sanctions imposed against persons and entities in relation to the conflict in Sudan. Go to https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main and click on Sudan on the world map for more information on the sanctions imposed.

On 18 July 2025, the Council of the European Union imposed sanctions against two individuals and two entities. The EU imposed sanctions against Keikel and Hussein Barsham. Keikel commanded the SSF, a militia affiliated with the SAF (see 2.2.1). The sanctions were imposed because his armed group had committed human rights violations in El Gezira against the Kanabi, a community of African migrant workers (see 2.5.4).[427]

Barsham, an RSF commander, was added to the sanctions list due to his involvement in killings, ethnically motivated violence, forced displacement and violence against civilians, in particular in Darfur. The EU also imposed sanctions against a bank affiliated with the RSF and a mining company affiliated with the SAF.[428]

In response to the massacres in El Fasher (see 2.5.8), the EU imposed sanctions against Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo, a brother of Hemedti and deputy commander of the RSF.[429]

2.6.6 UN Human Rights Council

In early September 2025, the UN Human Rights Council published an advance unedited version of its report on Sudan. The UN fact-finding mission (FFM) had made working visits to Ethiopia, Uganda, Chad and Kenya. Between October 2024 and July 2025, they interviewed 257 individuals – 137 women and 120 men.[430]

Based on its findings, the UN Human Rights Council concluded that the SAF and the RSF had violated international humanitarian law, committing violence against the civilian population on a 'widespread' scale. This UN body also concluded that the RSF may have committed crimes against humanity, including persecution on ethnic grounds and extermination. In this connection, the UN Human Rights Council determined that the RSF were deliberately targeting African communities, in particular the Zaghawa, Fur, Masalit and Tunjur.[431] The UN report made no mention of numbers of victims of targeted violence by the RSF against African population groups.

2.6.7 African Union (AU)

On 21 October 2025, the AU's African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) published a report on the human rights situation in Sudan.[432] In its report, the commission concluded that the SAF, the RSF and the militias associated with both sides had violated international humanitarian law. In reaching its conclusion, the ACHPR took account of the fact that the warring parties had continuously attacked civilians and civilian targets such as hospitals, schools and displacement camps. The combatants were also guilty of unlawful arrests, extrajudicial detentions, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, denial of humanitarian aid, looting, robberies, extrajudicial executions, sexual violence and recruitment of child soldiers.[433]

[427] European Council, *Sudan, Council sanctions individuals and entities over serious human rights violations and threats to peace, stability and security of the country,* 18 July 2025.
[428] European Council, *Sudan, Council sanctions individuals and entities over serious human rights violations and threats to peace, stability and security of the country,* 18 July 2025.
[429] European Council, *Sudan, Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union,* 20 November 2025.
[430] UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, p. 2.
[431] UN Human Rights Council, Sudan, *A war of atrocities*, 5 September 2025, pp. 1, 4, 5, 7 and 16.
[432] Darfur24, *AU Mission accuses warring Sudanese parties of massive human rights violations,* 21 October 2025.
[433] ACHPR, *Report of the virtual joint fact-finding mission on the human rights situation in the Sudan,* 21 October 2025, p. 98.

The findings of the ACHPR were based on a virtual FFM that took place between June 2024 and March 2025. As part of its research, the commission received information from victims and witnesses of human rights violations, academics, doctors, lawyers, journalists, human rights organisations and aid organisations. The ACHPR also made use of online sources and analyses of photographs and videos.[434]

[434] ACHPR, *Report of the virtual joint fact-finding mission on the human rights situation in the Sudan,* 21 October 2025, pp. 11, 19 and 20.

3 Quantitative conflict data

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an impression of the scale of the violence by presenting quantitative data. Based on these data, it also reveals trends in the intensity of the violence.

At the time of writing, it was unclear exactly how many had been killed in conflict-related violence and how many had died of associated factors, such as lack of emergency relief, food, medicines and vaccinations.[435] In many cases, victim numbers and security incidents were not reported because journalists were not able to work freely. They were intimidated, harassed and arrested by the warring parties. Foreign journalists had difficulty entering Sudan. In addition, the loss of internet services hampered the recording of victim numbers and incidents of violence.[436] See section 5.6 for more information on the situation of journalists.

In May 2024, Tom Perriello, the former US special envoy for Sudan, stated that between 15,000 and 150,000 people may have died as a result of the conflict.[437] A source pointed out that Perriello had not revealed what this estimate was based on.[438]

In order to obtain a substantiated view of the scale of the violence, this chapter looks at quantitative data recorded by the Sudan Research Group, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Section 3.2 discusses the research findings of the Sudan Research Group, section 3.3 considers the violent incidents and deaths recorded by ACLED and section 3.4 the civilian deaths reported by OHCHR.

3.2 Research findings of the Sudan Research Group

The Sudan Research Group is a research group of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).[439] In November 2024, it published a quantitative study on civilian fatalities of the war in the state of Khartoum. To that end, it had surveyed 417 respondents and examined 150 social media pages. The Sudan Research Group involved Sudanese civilian groups[440] and the diaspora in its research.[441]

[435] The Economist, *Measuring mortality is getting even harder in Africa,* 25 September 2025.
[436] Sudan Research Group, *War-time mortality in Sudan, A capture-recapture analysis,* 13 November 2024, p. 4. European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), *Sudan – Security situation,* February 2025, pp. 24-29 and 71-74. OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, p. 2.
[437] BBC, *Sudan death toll far higher than previously reported – study*, 14 November 2024. The Economist, *Measuring mortality is getting even harder in Africa,* 25 September 2025.
[438] Confidential source, 23 April 2025.
[439] See https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres-projects-groups/sudan-research-group#welcome for more information on this research group.
[440] For example, the so-called Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs), or local relief committees (see 5.5), and the Sudanese American Physicians Association (SAPA). The SAPA was originally a professional association of American doctors of Sudanese descent. The SAPA provides humanitarian aid and healthcare in Sudan. See https://sapa-usa.org for more information on this association.
[441] Sudan Research Group, *War-time mortality in Sudan,* 13 November 2024, pp. 2, 6, 7, 11 and 17.

Based on the aforementioned research, the Sudan Research Group documented 61,202 deaths resulting from conflict-related violence in the state of Khartoum in the period from 15 April 2023 to 4 June 2024.[442] The study did not reveal how many of these victims had been killed in targeted violence and how many in random violence. Neither did it differentiate between combatants and non-combatants.

The Sudan Research Group pointed out that the media had historically been heavily oriented towards Khartoum and that this state was most in contact with the Sudanese diaspora. For this reason, it was easier to document war deaths in Khartoum compared to other states and regions affected by conflict-related violence, such as Darfur, El Gezira and Kordofan. According to the Sudan Research Group, it was possible that similar or higher numbers of people had died as a result of conflict-related violence in those flashpoints.[443]

3.3 Violent incidents and deaths recorded by ACLED

On 14 August 2025, data on violent incidents were exported from the ACLED database.[444] To that end, three types of violence were selected over the period from 1 January 2023 to 8 August 2025. The data relate to the following three types of violence:

1. Battles;
2. Explosions/remote violence;
3. Violence against civilians.

A 'battle' is an armed encounter between warring parties. 'Explosions/remote violence' refers to a use of force to which the target cannot respond. This may include the use of artillery and grenade shelling, missile and drone attacks, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).[445] If the adversary seeks to intercept drones with an air defence system, ACLED codes the violence as a 'battle'.[446] 'Violence against civilians' refers to the deliberate use of force by an armed group against unarmed civilians.[447]

It should be noted that the attack on and destruction of the Zamzam IDP camp in April 2025 (see 2.5.8) was coded as a 'battle'. Although the attackers predominantly killed unarmed civilians, a handful of defenders offered temporary resistance. In accordance with ACLED's research methodology, the violent incident at Zamzam was therefore a 'battle'.[448]

Given that ACLED relies primarily on secondary reporting, there may be issues of underreporting, particularly in less densely populated or less accessible areas. Based on the data presented below, no concrete distinction can be made between the numbers of incidents of random and of targeted violence. This is because violent incidents are not coded on the basis of this distinction.[449]

[442] Sudan Research Group, *War-time mortality in Sudan,* 13 November 2024, pp. 2 and 12.
[443] Sudan Research Group, *War-time mortality in Sudan,* 13 November 2024, p. 13.
[444] This was done using an application named the Data Export Tool. The user requires a so-called access key for this purpose.
[445] Roadside bombs are an example of IEDs.
[446] Confidential source, 18 August 2025.
[447] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 30.
[448] Confidential source, 12 September 2025.
[449] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria,* May 2025, p. 161.

In the period from 1 January 2023 to 8 August 2025, ACLED recorded a total of 12,441 violent incidents. The table below shows how many battles, explosions/remote violent incidents and violent incidents against civilians took place in the 2023 calendar year, the 2024 calendar year and the period from 1 January to 8 August 2025.

Numbers of violent incidents recorded by ACLED (1 January 2023 - 8 August 2025)[450]

State	2023	2024	2025 (to 8 Aug)
Abyei	**81**	**61**	**27**
Battles	34	23	10
Explosions/remote violence	0	0	1
Violence against civilians	47	38	16
El Gezira	**147**	**993**	**189**
Battles	44	145	41
Explosions/remote violence	20	234	41
Violence against civilians	83	614	107
Blue Nile	**20**	**29**	**32**
Battles	11	12	23
Explosions/remote violence	0	9	7
Violence against civilians	9	8	2
Central Darfur	**170**	**48**	**38**
Battles	83	3	4
Explosions/remote violence	14	3	2
Violence against civilians	73	42	32
East Darfur	**23**	**55**	**56**
Battles	15	10	8
Explosions/remote violence	1	19	8
Violence against civilians	7	26	40
Gedaref	**14**	**32**	**7**
Battles	9	16	1
Explosions/remote violence	0	8	1
Violence against civilians	5	8	5
Kassala	**9**	**5**	**17**
Battles	4	4	8
Explosions/remote violence	0	0	1
Violence against civilians	5	1	8
Khartoum	**2,967**	**2,191**	**476**
Battles	1,642	825	181
Explosions/remote violence	940	1,166	174
Violence against civilians	385	200	121
North Darfur	**187**	**910**	**573**
Battles	94	421	235
Explosions/remote violence	8	243	226
Violence against civilians	85	246	112
North Kordofan	**170**	**185**	**308**
Battles	93	75	90
Explosions/remote violence	32	43	131

[450] ACLED, *Generated by the Data Export Tool*, accessed on 14 August 2025.

Violence against civilians	45	67	87
Northern State	**15**	**9**	**49**
Battles	12	3	30
Explosions/remote violence	2	1	10
Violence against civilians	1	5	9
Red Sea	**9**	**5**	**23**
Battles	5	2	18
Explosions/remote violence	0	0	2
Violence against civilians	4	3	3
River Nile	**12**	**47**	**27**
Battles	5	18	15
Explosions/remote violence	2	16	11
Violence against civilians	5	13	1
Sennar	**12**	**238**	**9**
Battles	3	107	2
Explosions/remote violence	5	69	3
Violence against civilians	4	62	4
South Darfur	**281**	**146**	**193**
Battles	178	23	34
Explosions/remote violence	14	40	60
Violence against civilians	89	83	99
South Kordofan	**136**	**130**	**133**
Battles	88	46	69
Explosions/remote violence	11	22	39
Violence against civilians	37	62	25
West Darfur	**234**	**62**	**29**
Battles	74	25	4
Explosions/remote violence	12	10	4
Violence against civilians	148	27	21
West Kordofan	**62**	**138**	**183**
Battles	39	76	58
Explosions/remote violence	6	28	71
Violence against civilians	17	34	54
White Nile	**17**	**114**	**108**
Battles	12	35	40
Explosions/remote violence	2	28	19
Violence against civilians	3	51	49
Total	**4,566**	**5,398**	**2,477**

Source: ACLED.

The table below provides an overview of the numbers of fatalities recorded by ACLED per state in the same period (1 January 2023 to 8 August 2025). These data were also exported from the ACLED database on 20 November 2025. The following disclaimer should be borne in mind when considering the information presented below.

In its own explanation of the methodologies used, ACLED states that data on fatalities are often the least accurate component of conflict reports. The organisation notes that it uses the most conservative estimates and bases its figures primarily on public, secondary reporting. If the death toll in a reported incident of violence is unknown, ACLED records no fatalities. Reports referring to 'dozens' or 'hundreds' of deaths are translated into records of ten and one hundred deaths, respectively.

ACLED's data are therefore underreported. In addition, ACLED records only fatalities due to violence. Although information on injuries, victims of looting, abduction and sexual violence may be described in the database, it does not appear in the reports and infographics published by ACLED. The ACLED data can be used to illustrate trends, and they are not absolute.[451]

Numbers of deaths recorded by ACLED per state (1 January 2023 - 8 August 2025)[452]

State	2023	2024	2025 (to 8 Aug)
Abyei	295	205	76
El Gezira	343	3,852	527
Blue Nile	56	209	81
Central Darfur	487	45	45
East Darfur	48	105	33
Gedaref	5	73	4
Kassala	3	1	12
Khartoum	6,652	3,025	1,455
North Darfur	632	5,498	4,851
North Kordofan	805	752	1,398
Northern State	45	5	47
Red Sea	1	6	3
River Nile	18	92	25
Sennar	8	852	82
South Darfur	1,831	305	592
South Kordofan	503	558	787
West Darfur	249	652	1,307
West Kordofan	4,962	165	40
White Nile	47	233	481
Total	**16,990**	**16,633**	**11,846**

Source: ACLED.

3.4 Civilian deaths recorded by OHCHR

According to the OHCHR data, violence against the civilian population appeared to increase during the reporting period. Between 1 January and 30 June 2025, this UN agency recorded at least 3,384 civilian deaths, whereas over the whole of 2024, 4,238 civilian deaths were reported. Of those 3,384 civilian deaths, 2,394, or approximately 70%, died as a result of conflict-related violence – for example, artillery shelling and air and drone attacks. The other 990 civilians, or approximately 30%, were summarily executed. The majority of civilian deaths took place in North Darfur (1,380), Khartoum (691), North Kordofan (346), El Gezira (251), West Kordofan (224) and South Kordofan (154).[453]

[451] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 29 and 30.
[452] ACLED, *Generated by the Data Export Tool*, accessed on 20 November 2025.
[453] OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, pp. 1, 4, 7 and 17.

OHCHR emphasised that the above data were underreported. Due to the circumstances described in section 3.1, it was impossible for OHCHR to obtain a complete view of the number of civilian deaths. The data gathered by OHCHR was obtained from interviews with survivors and witnesses in eastern Chad and Abyei.[454]

The table below shows the numbers of civilian deaths recorded by OHCHR in the period from 1 January to 30 June 2025. During this period, the UN agency recorded no civilian deaths in Gedaref and Red Sea.[455]

Numbers of civilian deaths recorded by OHCHR per state (1 January – 30 June 2025)

State	Number of civilian deaths
North Darfur	1,380
Khartoum	691
North Kordofan	346
El Gezira	251
West Kordofan	224
South Kordofan	154
South Darfur	124
White Nile	114
Sennar	38
East Darfur	12
River Nile	12
West Darfur	11
Northern State	9
Central Darfur	8
Blue Nile	6
Kassala	4
Total	**3,384**

Source: OHCHR.

[454] OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, p. 2.
[455] OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, p. 17.

4 Identity, nationality and documents

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is about identity, nationality and documents. Section 4.2 describes the extent to which Sudanese were able to apply for and obtain identity documents and have life events[456] recorded in the civil registry. Section 4.3 explains the extent to which it was possible to register marriages and what the registration process looked like. Section 4.4 discusses in which contexts document fraud was able to take place. Little public information was available on the above subjects. For this reason, most of the information in this chapter is from confidential sources.

4.2 Identity documents and registration in the civil registry

The war situation had a negative impact on the issuance of documents.[457] Many civil registry offices had been destroyed, abandoned or rendered inaccessible by the deteriorating security situation. At the time of writing, the Sudanese authorities were only issuing identity documents in states that were under the control of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), i.e. Red Sea, El Gezira, White Nile, Sennar, Gedaref, Kassala, River Nile and Northern State. After the SAF had recaptured Khartoum in March 2025 (see 2.5.7), the authorities also resumed issuing documents in Omdurman. In SAF-controlled states, the civil registry offices have remained operational.[458]

One source knew of a person who had applied for and obtained a passport in Port Sudan, the temporary seat of the Sudanese authorities (see 1.2), during the reporting period. The fees amounted to at least 250,000 Sudanese pounds.[459] The passport applicant was also required to provide passport photographs and the applicant's national identity number.[460] If the person in question did not have a national identity number, the person was required to provide a birth certificate and bring two paternal uncles as witnesses. The duration of a passport application was at least one month. If the applicant paid a bribe, the passport could be supplied more quickly, according to the source.[461]

In the areas controlled by the Rapid Support Force (RSF), no identity documents were issued and it was not possible to record life events in the civil registry. Civilians living in RSF territory who wished to apply for an identity document or have life events recorded in the civil registry had to go to SAF territory. In order to do so, they had to overcome logistical obstacles and risk their safety (see section 5.8 for information on abuses at checkpoints). A source called attention to social and other media reports showing that the Sudanese authorities had refused documents to persons from RSF territory or persons who were members of population groups regarded as 'pro-RSF'.[462]

[456] For example births, deaths, marriages and divorces.
[457] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 48.
[458] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[459] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 15 August 2025, 250,000 Sudanese pounds were equivalent to 367.84 euros.
[460] Known as *al-raqm al-watani* in Arabic. This number is equivalent to a Dutch Citizen Service Number (*Burgerservicenummer,* BSN).
[461] Confidential source, 18 March and 18 August 2025.
[462] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in SAF territory could apply to a civil registry office outside their original place of residence. However, if they did not have the required underlying documents, attempts to register a life event could still fail, according to a source.[463]

Sudanese abroad also faced problems when applying for documents. For instance, in June 2025 *Radio Dabanga*[464] reported that passport fees for Sudanese in Uganda amounted to 250 US dollars.[465] However, for many Sudanese refugees in Uganda, those fees were unaffordable.[466] See section 11.5 for more information on the situation of Sudanese refugees in Uganda.

On 22 October 2025, prime minister Idris (see 1.3.3) announced that passport fees for Sudanese abroad would be reduced by thirty percent from 1 November to 31 December 2025. At the time of the announcement, a Sudanese passport issued abroad cost 250 US dollars for an adult and 150 US dollars for a child.[467]

It was also reported that the Sudanese embassy in Uganda had refused to issue a new passport to a prominent Sudanese human rights defender. Critics accused the diplomatic mission of Sudan of a politically motivated decision.[468] At the time of writing, the human rights defender in question had not received a new passport.[469]

4.3 Marriage registration

Section 4.2 made it clear that document applications and registrations in the civil registry were only possible in the SAF-controlled states. The same was true for court marriage registrations, which only took place in SAF areas.[470]

Persons living in RSF territory therefore had to travel to SAF territory to have a marriage registered before a court. IDPs living in SAF territory could apply to a court outside their original place of residence. However, if they did not have the required underlying documents, attempts to register a marriage before a court could still fail, according to a source. Required documents could include identity cards, passports and a national identity number.[471]

A *mazoon* was responsible for the marriage ceremony. A mazoon was not an Islamic cleric but a legal assistant authorised by the court in question to carry out this responsibility.[472] At the time of the marriage ceremony, a mazoon would draw up a marriage contract. This contract was known as *Qassima* and contained the following details:

[463] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[464] *Radio Dabanga* is an independent news platform that reports on Sudan from Amsterdam. The platform was set up in 2008 and originally focused on the war in Darfur. Today, the platform covers news from the whole country. See https://www.dabangasudan.org/en//about-us for more information on *Radio Dabanga*. The term *dabanga* refers to a traditional granary made from clay, water and dried grass that can be used to store food like grain or maize. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 277. Radio Dabanga, *About us*, undated, accessed on 15 August 2025. Fanack Water, *Radio Dabanga – an Amsterdam-based lifeline for Sudan no one can afford to lose,* 18 November 2025.
[465] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 15 August 2025, 250 US dollars were equivalent to 213.89 euros.
[466] Radio Dabanga, *6,000 Sudanese refugees face passport dilemma in Kampala,* 21 June 2025.
[467] Darfur24, *Government reduces passport fees for Sudanese abroad for one month,* 23 October 2025. According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 24 October 2025, 150 US dollars were equivalent to 129.39 euros.
[468] Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese activist denied passport renewal,* 16 July 2024.
[469] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[470] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[471] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[472] Confidential source, 4 August 2025.

- The full names of the spouses;
- The full name of the *wali* ('guardian')[473] of the bride;
- The full names of the lawyers[474] of the spouses (if present);
- The date and place of the marriage;
- A description of the dowry;[475]
- The names and signatures of the witnesses.[476]

A marriage contract served as the source document for the registration of a marriage before a court. The spouses were required to present the document to the court in order to have the marriage registered. For use abroad, the marriage contract had to be legalised; first by the Authentications Directorate of the Sudan Judiciary and then by the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[477]

For civilians, including IDPs living outside their original place of residence, it was possible to obtain a marriage certificate from a court in SAF territory. If they did not have the required underlying documents they were required to provide witnesses for the application or present an affidavit.[478]

4.4 Document fraud

Little information was available about opportunities for document fraud. A source observed that within the context of the current war, document fraud was taking place in both manual and digital form. The same source noted that in RSF territory in particular, civil registry offices had been looted and destroyed. These circumstances enabled individuals to produce forged documents, the contents of which could not be verified. There were also cases of individuals using paid or false witnesses to facilitate the validation of forged documents by a court. In the context of asylum and family reunification, identity cards, passports, birth certificates and marriage certificates were forged in particular, according to the source.[479] It was not possible to establish the scale on which this document fraud was taking place based on the statements by the source. No additional information about document fraud was available.

[473] In an administrative sense, the term 'wali' can also refer to a governor. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 38.
[474] Referred to by the source as 'attorneys' or 'agents'.
[475] Known in Arabic as *Mahar*.
[476] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[477] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[478] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[479] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.

5 Human rights

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the general human rights situation. Section 5.2 describes the extent to which judicial process and legal protection existed. Section 5.3 highlights the arrests that took place in both SAF and RSF territory. Section 5.4 deals with detention conditions and the ill-treatment and torture to which detainees were subjected. The situations of aid workers, critical and independent journalists and critical social media users are described in sections 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7, respectively. Section 5.8 looks at the abuses that took place at checkpoints. Section 5.9 considers the scale on which enforced disappearances took place, while section 5.10 deals with the relations and interactions between different population groups. Section 5.11 explains the situation of religious minorities, in particular that of Christians.

Chapters 8, 9 and 10 describe the situation of women, LGBTIQ+ people and unaccompanied minors, respectively.

5.2 The rule of law and legal protection

As far as could be ascertained, there were few public sources available that were specifically concerned with the rule of law and legal protection in Sudan. This chapter is therefore largely based on information from confidential sources.

In the preceding reporting period, the police, courts and public prosecution service were no longer functioning properly due to the war. There was no judicial and administrative machinery in the areas of RSF control.[480] That situation persisted in the reporting period. As a result of the war, the legal system was functioning to a limited extent in the areas controlled by the SAF. The police and judicial system lacked the capacity to guarantee an adequate and independent judicial process.[481]

In late August 2025, the independent news platform *Radio Dabanga* (hereinafter: *Dabanga*) published an in-depth article about the rule of law in SAF territory. It revealed that there were thousands of people in detention on suspicion of collaboration with the RSF. For the most part, the detainees had been active in the pro-democracy movement or had a regional background or ethnicity that was seen as linking them to the RSF. Most had been convicted of 'undermining the constitutional order', 'provoking war against the state' or 'crimes against humanity'. Between 1 June and 31 July 2025, *Dabanga* recorded 81 death sentences and 51 prison sentences. The prison terms ranged from five years to life. The human rights experts consulted by *Dabanga* found that the judiciary was largely under the control of the SAF and served as an instrument of repression and control.[482]

Civilians had limited recourse to legal protection from the Sudanese authorities in SAF territory. Such legal protection was dependent on a person's individual circumstances. For instance, the Sudanese authorities associated Darfuri Arabs with the RSF. In SAF territory, it was therefore difficult for a Darfuri Arab to initiate legal

[480] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 52 and 53.
[481] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[482] Radio Dabanga, *Judicial rulings, The sword of the Sudanese army is on the necks of civilians,* 24 August 2025.

proceedings against a person whose roots lay in the north of Sudan, according to a source.[483]

Three other sources pointed out that citizens were unable to turn to the Sudanese authorities if the perpetrators were SAF soldiers or were connected with the Sudanese security apparatus in some other way.[484] One source cited the example of a group of pro-democracy youths in Atbara, a city in SAF territory. A motorcycle gang was causing problems in their neighbourhood. In response, the pro-democracy youths formed a neighbourhood guard and they succeeded in apprehending two of the criminal motorcyclists. When they handed over the captured motorcyclists to the police, it transpired that they belonged to the so-called mustanfareen, i.e. civilians who had joined the SAF (see 2.2.1 and section 6.2). The police interrogated and beat the youths, who sustained skull and hand fractures. Afterwards, the police let them go.[485] Another source had knowledge of a seventy year-old woman whose house in Khartoum had been requisitioned by SAF soldiers. After complaining to the police, the woman went missing.[486]

There was no fully-fledged administrative and legal system in RSF territory.[487] Nevertheless, the RSF announced that they had set up an administrative system in their area of control.[488] In late July 2025, a Sudan expert at the Clingendael Institute concluded that the civilian administrative bodies in RSF territory had failed to deliver in terms of water supplies and education.[489]

Sources questioned whether and to what extent the administrative bodies in RSF territory actually supplied services to the civilian population. They noted that the RSF had no administrative experience and that the composition of the administrative bodies was ethnically exclusive. They consisted solely of Arabs; there were no posts held by Africans.[490]

One source had heard that traditional courts were operating in the RSF-controlled part of Kordofan. Allegedly, these courts considered minor offences, such as livestock theft. The rulings of traditional courts were known to be 'arbitrary', according to the source.[491]

Whether a person was able to escape a particular threat by moving to a different part of Sudan depended on their individual circumstances. For example, it was known that it was difficult for civilians in besieged El Fasher to leave the city (see 2.5.8).[492] Moreover, freedom of movement was restricted for civilians in general due to the presence of checkpoints,[493] at which all kinds of abuses took place (see 5.8).[494]

[483] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[484] Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[485] Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[486] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[487] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[488] Darfur24, *RSF form first civilian administration in North Darfur,* 19 July 2025. Darfur24, *A forum to evaluate RSF's civil administrations kicks off in West Darfur,* 26 July 2025.
[489] NOS, *Ook met twee regeringen woekert de humanitaire crisis in Sudan voort,* 28 July 2025.
[490] Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[491] Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[492] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[493] Also known as 'gates'.
[494] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.

5.3 Arrests

5.3.1 Introduction

During the reporting period, there were regular media reports of arrests by both the SAF and the RSF. This section first discusses the pattern of arrests in SAF territory (subsection 5.3.2) and then the pattern of arrests in RSF territory (subsection 5.3.3). Finally, subsection 5.3.4 looks at the potential risks run by family members of activists and human rights defenders.

5.3.2 Arrests in SAF territory

The SAF and their affiliated groups primarily targeted aid workers (see 5.5), human rights lawyers, pro-democracy youths, critical and independent journalists (see 5.6) and people of Darfuri descent.[495]

There were various reasons why the SAF and their affiliated groups targeted the aforementioned groups. The human rights lawyers and pro-democracy youths had played a prominent role during the anti-government protests against the former Bashir government (see 1.2) and generally favoured a peaceful resolution to the conflict. During the period of Bashir's rule (1989-2019), the SAF and the affiliated intelligence services had compiled files on members of the pro-democracy movement. Thanks to those files, the attention of the SAF was drawn to those individuals.[496] According to a source, the SAF mainly targeted Darfuri Arabs, because the RSF drew most of their support from Arab population groups in Darfur (see 2.3.1).[497]

Several examples of individual and group arrests that took place in SAF territory during the reporting period are provided below. These incidents should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

In January 2025, the SAF arrested a female student in Khartoum. On 1 May 2025, she was still in detention. The reason for her arrest and detention remained unclear to the family. The likely reason was that there were several photographs on her mobile phone revealing her participation in the pro-democracy protests against Bashir (see 1.2).[498]

In early May 2025, the Military Intelligence Service (MIS), the intelligence arm of the SAF, arrested six to seven activists in Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan. They were members of the local resistance and relief committees. The arrested activists had expressed criticism of the war and government corruption. They also maintained social media contacts with activists abroad. Accordingly, the group was suspected of collaboration with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). By late June 2025, they had all been released.[499]

[495] SWM, *Mass arrests in eastern Sudanese states as RSF advance*, 5 July 2024. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Crackdown on activist and journalists sparks outcry in Sudan,* 8 July 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Judicial rulings,* 24 August 2025.
[496] Confidential source, 6 November 2025. Confidential source, 13 November 2025.
[497] Confidential source, 13 November 2025.
[498] Ayin Network, *Arbitrary arrests in the capital, criminalised for survival,* 1 May 2025.
[499] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.

On 1 June 2025, the Sudanese authorities arrested a university lecturer in Blue Nile, a state in the south-east of Sudan. The authorities initially gave no reason for his arrest and detention.[500] It later became clear that his involvement in the short-lived democratic transition (2019-2021) had made him suspect in the eyes of the authorities. The university authorities signed a written statement in which they promised that the lecturer would focus exclusively on his academic tasks. The authorities subsequently released him on 6 June 2025.[501]

On 6 July 2025, the Sudanese authorities in El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, arrested four academics. They were suspected of collaboration with the RSF. The authorities did not reveal what that suspicion was based on.[502]

In late September 2025, *Darfur24*, an independent news platform, published a series of accounts of individuals who had travelled from Darfur to Northern State. They were from Nyala and El Daein, two cities in Darfur known as RSF strongholds. On arrival in Northern State, they were arrested by the SAF, searched, questioned and detained on suspicion of collaboration with the RSF. The period of detention ranged from 24 hours to 21 days.[503]

On 21 October 2025, Emergency Lawyers reported that the Sudanese authorities had arrested five lawyers in Khartoum. According to this Sudanese human rights group, the only reason for their arrest was that they were defending RSF suspects.[504] Practices of this kind were known as 'guilt by association'.

In November 2025, the General Intelligence Service (GIS)[505] carried out a wave of arrests in South Kordofan. Those arrested included activists. They were accused of offences including taking part in an unlawful assembly and spying for the RSF and the SPLM-N. At the time of writing, local sources estimated that over thirty people were being held. They were not permitted to see their families or a lawyer, a form of detention known as *incommunicado*.[506]

On 22 November 2025, the Sudanese authorities arrested a member of the resistance committee in El Obeid. According to this resistance committee, there was no legal basis for the arrest and it was purely designed to deter activists.[507]

5.3.3 Arrests in RSF territory

The RSF also arrested persons in their area of control, in particular (alleged) members of the National Congress Party (NCP), the former governing party during the rule of Omar al-Bashir (see 1.2). Other persons linked to the former regime, such as former government soldiers and civil servants and members of the former security service,[508] ran the risk of being arrested.[509]

[500] Human Rights and Development Organization Centre (HUDO Centre), *Urgent appeal, The JSC arrested Dr. Hassan Hamza in Roseries, Sudan,* 2 June 2025.
[501] HUDO Centre, *Update on the arrest of Dr. Hassan Hamza by JSC in Roseries, Sudan,* 11 June 2025.
[502] Darfur24, *4 academics arrested in North Kordofan on charges of collaborating with RSF,* 6 July 2025.
[503] Darfur24, *Security forces accused of abusing Darfur travellers in Northern State,* 28 September 2025.
[504] Sudan Tribune, *Five lawyers arrested in Khartoum for defending RSF suspects, rights group says,* 21 October 2025.
[505] The GIS fell under the Sudanese Ministry of the Interior and enjoyed wide-ranging powers and a large degree of immunity. This intelligence service was allowed to summon, arrest, interrogate and detain persons. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 54.
[506] Darfur24, *Intelligence Service intensifies arrests of activists in South Kordofan,* 17 November 2025.
[507] Moatinoon, *Al-Obeid resistance committees condemn the arrest of their members,* 25 November 2025.
[508] During Bashir's rule (1989-2019), this was known as the National Intelligence Security Service (NISS). The NISS was trained by East Germany and was known to be 'well-organised'. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 54. Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[509] Sudan Tribune, *RSF detains scores in Darfur, accuses them of spying for army,* 9 June 2025. Darfur24, *RSF apprehends 20 people in East Darfur on charges of collaborating with SAF,* 12 June 2025.

For instance, on 10 August 2025 the RSF carried out a wave of arrests in Adila, a town in East Darfur, apprehending over thirty former NCP members.[510] On 5 and 6 October 2025, the RSF arrested approximately seventy people in South Darfur on suspicion of collaboration with the SAF. Those arrested included civil servants, former police officers and IDPs.[511]

On 20 September, the RSF arrested a women's rights activist in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. She was on her way from Zalingei to Kampala to attend a women's rights meeting. At the time of writing, she was in detention and had no access to a lawyer or family members.[512] Reports did not specify why this woman had been arrested and detained.

In the same month, the RSF arrested two teachers in Nyala on suspicion of collaboration with the SAF. One of the teachers, who was also a headteacher, had refused to reopen his school. As a result, the RSF took the view that he was refusing to recognise the authority of the Taasis coalition. The other teacher had received salary payments from the Sudanese authorities in Port Sudan. For the RSF, this was sufficient reason to assume that he was collaborating with the SAF.[513]

5.3.4 Family members of activists and human rights defenders

As far as could be ascertained, no public information was available about how the warring parties dealt with family members of activists and human rights defenders (hereinafter: opponents). The information from confidential sources proved somewhat anecdotal and fragmentary in nature.

One source had no knowledge of family members of opponents who were targeted purely due to their familial relationship with an opponent.[514]

Another source stated that family members of opponents were rarely targeted. This source added that the RSF would sometimes take a family member of an opponent hostage in order to put pressure on the opponent. Taking a family member hostage was also an opportunity to demand a ransom. In SAF territory, the Sudanese authorities would sometimes harass and interrogate family members of an opponent, but that was as far as it went, according to the same source.[515]

Yet another source had knowledge of an activist from Singa who had fled abroad. The authorities subsequently arrested the activist's two brothers. By doing so, they sought to put pressure on the activist. As far as could be ascertained, the two brothers were released following a month in detention.[516]

5.4 Detention conditions, ill-treatment and torture

During the reporting period, both the SAF and the RSF held individuals in poor detention conditions and subjected detainees to ill-treatment and torture. Upon arrest and subsequent detention, a person was not protected by procedural

[510] Darfur24, *RSF apprehends prominent NCP figures in East Darfur,* 11 August 2025.
[511] Radio Dabanga, *RSF launches arrest campaign in South Darfur,* 8 October 2025.
[512] DNHR, *Arbitrary arrest of women human rights defender Suwaken Ishaq Adam Arbab in Nyala, South Darfur,* 28 September 2025.
[513] ACJPS, *South Darfur, Two teachers detained in Nyala City on suspicion of collaborating with the SAF-led government,* 6 October 2025.
[514] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[515] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[516] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.

safeguards. For the most part, detainees were released upon payment of a ransom.[517] According to the Sudanese human rights organisation Sudan Human Rights Hub (SHRH)[518], the aforementioned human rights violations were 'systemic' in nature. SHRH based this conclusion on Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and statements from victims and witnesses.[519]

In early March 2025, the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report on detention practices of the SAF and RSF in Khartoum in the period from 15 April 2023 to June 2024. The OHCHR's findings were based, among other things, on interviews with 34 individuals and analyses of satellite images. Of the 34 people interviewed, 26 had been held in detention by the RSF and 8 by the SAF. The other five interviewees were witnesses or family members of detainees.[520]

In the above period, the OHCHR identified 39 RSF detention centres in Khartoum (17 in the city centre, 13 in Bahri/North Khartoum and 9 in Omdurman) and approximately seven operated by the SAF. During the same period, the RSF were holding approximately ten thousand people in detention. The OHCHR was not able to provide an estimate of the number of detainees in the SAF detention centres.[521]

According to the OHCHR, neither the SAF nor the RSF observed procedural safeguards. Detainees were not permitted contact with family or a lawyer. They were kept in overcrowded, poorly ventilated rooms. Sanitary facilities in the detention centres of both conflict parties were also lacking. Both the SAF and the RSF subjected their detainees to serious forms of ill-treatment and torture, such as beating with rifle butts and whips and administering electric shocks.[522]

The research findings of Emergency Lawyers were consistent with those of the OHCHR. In the period following the recapture of Khartoum by the SAF (see 2.5.7), this group of Sudanese human rights lawyers documented 161 arrests. The SAF suspected those arrested of collaboration with the RSF. Emergency Lawyers concluded that the persons in detention were 'systematically' tortured. Some were released in a poor state of health; others were prosecuted or died in detention.[523]

The Sudanese Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a human rights organisation based in the United Kingdom (UK),[524] documented 3,300 detentions in Wad Madani, El Hasahisa and Rafaa,[525] three cities in El Gezira, between 15 April 2023 and September 2025. The detentions were carried out by security entities linked to the SAF, such as the Military Intelligence Service (MIS), the General Intelligence Service (GIS), the Joint Force (see 2.4) and the Sudan Shield Forces (see 2.2.1).[526] Those detained included many civil activists. The detainees were beaten, tortured, starved and denied medical treatment. The detention centres were overcrowded; for

[517] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, pp. 7 and 8. Sudan Human Rights Hub (SHRH), *Sudan's shadow prisons, Captivity, torture, and enforced disappearance,* May 2025, last updated on 17 July 2025, pp. 3, 4, 6 and 7.
[518] See https://sudanhrh.org/en for more information on SHRH.
[519] SHRH, *Sudan's shadow prisons,* May 2025, last updated on 17 July 2025, pp. 1, 2 and 17.
[520] OHCHR, *Don't ask about him', Detention facilities and practices in Khartoum State in the context of the conflict in the Sudan,* 6 March 2025, pp. 3 and 4.
[521] OHCHR, *Don't ask about him',* 6 March 2025, pp. 9 and 16.
[522] OHCHR, *Don't ask about him',* 6 March 2025, pp. 8, 9, 11 and 17.
[523] BBC, *Sudan army torturing people to death, says rights group,* 17 August 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese rights group accuses security cells of torture, disappearances,* 17 August 2025.
[524] This human rights organisation should not be confused with the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), which is also based in the UK.
[525] Also spelt 'Rifa'a'.
[526] Abbreviated as 'SSF'.

example, SOHR documented over seventy detainees being held in Rafaa in a cell measuring six by eight metres.[527]

One source had documented thirty cases of torture in the period from April 2023 to early July 2025. Some instances of torture were committed by the SAF; others by the RSF. All of the victims were civilians. Most of these cases of torture had taken place in El Gezira and Singa, according to the source.[528]

Another source had knowledge of sixty youths in Bue Nile, a state in the south-east of Sudan, who had been apprehended and detained by the Sudanese authorities. The detained youths were being held in an overcrowded cell with no ventilation. They were forced to sleep on the floor and were given one meal per day. Some had not showered in a month, according to the source.[529]

Below are some other examples of detention and torture practices that appeared in the media during the reporting period. These examples are provided solely for illustrative purposes and should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 9 January 2025, the RSF arrested a doctor in the eastern part of Khartoum. In late June 2025, the Sudan Doctors Network (SDN), a group representing Sudanese doctors, revealed that their fellow physician had been tortured to death in an RSF detention centre.[530]

On 22 April 2025, a teachers' interest group revealed that a teacher had been tortured to death. The teacher in question had fled the violence in Omdurman and moved to Damazin, the capital of Blue Nile, where he was arrested by the MIS. Following months of incommunicado detention, he died.[531]

On 16 June 2025, the SAF-affiliated GIS apprehended a pharmacist in Al-Rahad, a city in North Kordofan, without an arrest warrant. She was suspected of collaboration with the RSF. During her five days in detention, the woman was tortured.[532]

In early September 2025, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS)[533] revealed that three detainees had reportedly died of cholera in a prison near Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. This overcrowded prison in RSF territory housed over two thousand detainees. The cholera-related deaths in the prison were probably attributable to a lack of sanitation, clean water, healthcare and food.[534] See section 7.3 for information on the cholera outbreak in Sudan.

In early October 2025, *Darfur24* revealed that a worker in Blue Nile had died of injuries sustained during torture in detention. Prior to his detention, he had criticised an employee of the MIS who had jumped the queue when buying sugar. The MIS subsequently arrested and tortured him. In late September 2025, the worker was released, but he died on the way to hospital.[535]

[527] Radio Dabanga, *Observatory for Human Rights: 3k+ detained in Sudan's El Gezira state amid widespread violations,* 16 September 2025.
[528] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[529] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[530] Sudans Post, *Sudanese doctor dies under RSF torture,* 25 June 2025.
[531] Sudans Post, *Detained teacher tortured by SAF intelligence, teachers' body says,* 22 April 2025.
[532] Darfur24, *Sudan's GIS torture female pharmacist in North Kordofan,* 5 July 2025.
[533] The ACJPS is a New York-based NGO dedicated to monitoring and promoting human rights in Sudan. See https://www.acjps.org for more information on this NGO.
[534] ACJPS, *Cholera outbreak in Sudan, Detainees succumb to untreated cholera at Deqris Prison in Nyala City, South Darfur,* 2 September 2025.
[535] Darfur24, *Worker dies after torture by army personnel in Blue Nile State,* 6 October 2025.

On 11 November 2025, *Darfur24* revealed that two men had died in an RSF prison in Nyala. One prisoner was a retired police officer who was suspected of collaboration with the SAF. He was not permitted to take medication for his diabetes and high blood pressure. The other prisoner was suspected of fraud and collaboration with the SAF, and died as a result of torture.[536]

5.5 Aid workers

During the preceding reporting period, aid workers were targeted by the warring parties. The SAF suspected aid workers of collaboration with the RSF and vice versa. Aid workers were harassed, arrested, kidnapped and, in the most serious cases, killed. They included both employees of professional aid organisations and volunteers for the Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs).[537]

The EERs grew out of the resistance committees that played a leading role in the anti-government protests against Bashir in 2018 and 2019 (see section 1.2). They supplied various services to civilians in need of assistance, such as food, healthcare and childcare. Most EERs received financial support from the Sudanese diaspora, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and UN agencies.[538] In September 2025, ERRs were active in thirteen of Sudan's eighteen states.[539] In late October 2024, António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), indicated that there were more than seven hundred ERRs throughout Sudan.[540]

The violence against aid workers in Sudan continued during the current reporting period. Both the SAF and the RSF targeted aid workers.[541] Quantitative and qualitative data on the violence against aid workers in Sudan are presented below. These data should certainly not be regarded as exhaustive.

According to the UN, sixty aid workers lost their lives in Sudan in 2024.[542] In the year previous, 25 aid workers had died.[543] On 19 August 2025, the UN revealed that since April 2023, more than 120 aid workers had been killed.[544] It was not clear from the UN statement whether those numbers related only to employees of professional aid organisations or whether they also included volunteers for citizens' initiatives such as ERRs. It was equally unclear how many aid workers had been killed by targeted or random violence.

[536] Darfur24, *Two detainees die in Daqris Prison as families accuse RSF of abuse,* 11 November 2025.
[537] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 57, 74 and 75.
[538] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 57. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, pp. 29 and 30. Al Jazeera, *Sudanese relief workers in the capital fear reprisals from army,* 6 February 2025. Al Jazeera, *Two years into Sudan's war, Where is its civil society?,* 17 April 2025. De Morgen, *'Ons land is een paradijs', maar toch lijkt Soedan de hel, Wat is er aan de hand?*, 4 September 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Emergency Response Rooms of Sudan win Rafto Prize 2025,* 18 September 2025. The Economist, *Sudan's remarkable mutual-aid groups,* 16 October 2025. Moatinoon, *These are the unsung heroes healing Sudan's wounds,* 21 October 2025. Moatinoon, *Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms, A living model of the citizen-centered state,* 25 November 2025.
[539] Radio Dabanga, *Emergency Response Rooms of Sudan win Rafto Prize 2025,* 18 September 2025.
[540] UN, *Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council – on Sudan,* 28 October 2024.
[541] HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, p. 30. Al Jazeera, *Sudanese relief workers in the capital fear reprisals from army,* 6 February 2025. Ayin Network, *Increasing insecurity, Critical aid volunteers leave south Khartoum,* 18 March 2025. Confidential source, 31 March 2025. Al Jazeera, *Two years into Sudan's war,* 17 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, pp. 13 and 14. OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, pp. 5 and 13.
[542] OCHA, *World Humanitarian Day, Attacks on aid workers hit another record, humanitarians call for urgent action,* 19 August 2025.
[543] The Independent, *A record 383 aid workers were killed in global hotspots in 2024, nearly half in Gaza, UN says,* 19 August 2025.
[544] OCHA, *A call to protect aid workers and fund the response in Sudan,* 19 August 2025.

The Aid Worker Security Database (AWSD)[545] recorded 60 aid workers killed in 2024 and 36 aid workers killed from 1 January to 10 September 2025. According to the same database, sixteen aid workers were kidnapped in 2024 and seventeen aid workers were kidnapped from 1 January to 10 September 2025 (see section 5.9 for more information on enforced disappearances).[546] The AWSD defines an 'aid worker' as an employee or volunteer working for a professional aid organisation.[547] It was not clear from the AWSD data how many aid workers had been killed by targeted or random violence.

According to the ACJPS, between April 2023 and August 2025, 120 aid workers were killed.[548] It was not clear from the findings of the ACJPS whether that number related only to employees of professional aid organisations or whether it also included volunteers for citizens' initiatives. It was equally unclear how many aid workers had been killed by targeted or random violence.

Between April 2023 and 27 October 2025, the Red Crescent in Sudan lost 21 employees and volunteers.[549] It was unclear how many employees and volunteers of the Red Crescent had been killed by targeted or random violence.

According to the Sudan Doctors' Trade Union, between April 2023 and 8 November 2025, 94 health workers were killed. The fatalities included doctors, pharmacists, nurses and medical students. Some had been killed by gunfire or artillery fire, while others had died as a result of torture and/or poor detention conditions. The majority of health workers had been killed in Khartoum, El Gezira, North Darfur, West Kordofan and Sennar.[550] The communiqué of the doctors union did not reveal how many health workers had been killed by targeted or random violence or how many had been killed in each state.

According to an ERR spokesperson, between mid-April 2023 and early February 2025, at least 112 ERR volunteers had been killed. The actual number of ERR volunteers killed was probably higher, because not every ERR volunteer killed was reported for fear of reprisals.[551] It was not clear from the statement by the ERR spokesperson whether all the ERR volunteers killed were victims of targeted violence or whether some of them had died as a result of random conflict-related violence, for example artillery bombardments.

One source had knowledge of an ERR located within SAF territory during the Battle for Khartoum (see 2.5.7). At one point, members of the ERR collected medical equipment from a part of Omdurman then under the control of the RSF. Upon returning to SAF territory, they were stopped at an SAF checkpoint (see section 5.8 for more information on abuses at checkpoints). The soldiers suspected the aid workers of collaboration with the RSF. They detained the aid workers and kicked and beat them. The soldiers also confiscated the equipment. However, one aid worker knew a captain in the SAF, who was able to secure the aid workers' freedom. Due to this personal connection with an army captain, the aid workers did not have to pay

[545] The AWSD records violence against aid workers worldwide. See https://www.aidworkersecurity.org for more information on the AWSD.
[546] AWSD, *Database,* undated, accessed on 10 September 2025.
[547] AWSD, *About the data,* undated, accessed on 10 September 2025.
[548] ACJPS, *Report on the human rights situation in Sudan, Darfur & conflict-affected states, August 2025,* 17 September 2025, p. 2.
[549] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), *IFRC on five Sudanese Red Crescent volunteers killed: 'We are horrified',* 28 October 2025.
[550] Moatinoon, *Doctors' Union: 94 medical workers killed since outbreak of war,* published on 10 November 2025, updated on 11 November 2025.
[551] Al Jazeera, *Sudanese relief workers in the capital fear reprisals from army,* 6 February 2025.

bribes for their release. The medical equipment was also returned to them, but they resolved never again to travel to RSF territory, according to the source.[552]

The independent news network *Ayin* documented the arrest of an ERR volunteer by the General Intelligence Service (GIS) in South Kordofan on 24 May 2025. During his detention, he was threatened with death, tortured and held in an overcrowded cell. The employees of the intelligence service also confiscated his phone. On 3 June 2025, he was released by the GIS.[553] The conditions under which he had been released were not clear from the news article.

On 25 August 2025, a resistance committee revealed that the Sudanese authorities had arrested Barir Al-Toum, a prominent aid worker in Port Sudan. He was well known for providing aid to IDPs who had fled to Port Sudan. Al-Toum was part of the ERR in Red Sea state.[554]

In late August 2025, it became clear that Khalid Al-Zubair Shan Al-Malih, better known as 'Khalid Esti', had died in captivity. Khalid had participated as an activist in the pro-democracy protests against Bashir (see section 1.2) and was active as a volunteer within an ERR in Omdurman. The SAF arrested him on 1 November 2023 on suspicion of collaboration with the RSF. He had reportedly starved to death in a cell.[555]

Alongside the ERRs, other citizens' groups that provided relief to the needy had emerged from Sudanese society, such as the community kitchens.[556] These were rooted in the Sudanese culture of community and the Islamic traditions of *zakat* and *sadaqah*.[557] The community kitchens provided food to people who could no longer afford rising food prices. It should be noted that the distinction between EERs and community kitchens was sometimes vague. The ERRs had emerged from the resistance committees and most had a community kitchen. Conversely, not every community kitchen was part of an ERR.[558]

The community kitchens were also a target for the warring parties because they had mostly emerged from the pro-democracy movement. Both the SAF and the RSF suspected the community kitchens of espionage or of recording human rights violations in order to report them to the international community.[559] When the RSF attacked and destroyed the displacement camp at Zamzam in North Darfur in April 2025 (see 2.5.8), they also killed two volunteers at a local community kitchen.[560]

One source reported that both the RSF and the SAF attacked community kitchens with the intention of consuming the food themselves or selling it. The source stated that the RSF attacked community kitchens more often than the SAF. When asked, the source was unable to further quantify this difference.[561]

[552] Confidential source, 24 April 2025.
[553] Ayin Network, *South Kordofan, Authorities detain aid volunteers, block agencies as conflict intensifies,* 19 June 2025.
[554] Sudans Post, *Resistance committees: SAF's de facto government arrested Red Sea aid worker,* 25 August 2025.
[555] Ayin Network, *Khalid Esti: from the streets of resistance to a cell of starvation,* 25 August 2025.
[556] Community kitchens are known in Arabic as *Taka(a)ya* (singular: *Takiye*). They are also known as food kitchens and soup kitchens.
[557] *Zakat* is the compulsory annual almsgiving and *sadaqah* is its voluntary counterpart. They can take the form of charity work or a donation, for example.
[558] Confidential source, 27 March 2025. Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Islamic Relief, *Takaaya, How community kitchens offer a local lifeline to Sudan's hunger crisis,* November 2025, pp. 4, 5, 20 and 21. NOS, *Jonge Sudanezen zijn de stille helden van de oorlog,* 12 November 2025.
[559] Confidential source, 6 November 2025. Confidential source, 13 November 2025.
[560] SIHA, *Darfur genocide continues, RSF slaughters civilians, women volunteers, and children in Zamzam Camp,* 12 April 2025.
[561] Confidential source, 24 April 2025.

The scope for ERRs and community kitchens to operate appeared not to be limited by violence and intimidation only. On 12 May 2025, the authorities in the state of Khartoum announced that all citizens' initiatives would henceforth be required to register with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC),[562] a government commission responsible for overseeing the country's humanitarian sector (see also 7.5). Critics feared that a proportion of the budgets of the ERRs and community kitchens would be lost to bureaucracy and corruption at the HAC and that this essential form of aid would be curtailed, given that it would be under stricter government supervision.[563] At the time of writing, it was unclear how this ordinance was being implemented and what the potential consequences would be.[564]

Employees of professional aid organisations were also targeted. Several illustrative examples are discussed below. Like the examples given for EERs, these should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 11 April 2025, during the attack on Zamzam (see 2.5.8), RSF fighters knowingly shot dead nine employees of the international aid organisation Relief International.[565] Prior to the attack, the RSF had threatened the employees of Relief International. In the aftermath of the attack, two other employees of Relief International died of their wounds.[566]

On 2 June 2025, a UN convoy was targeted in the vicinity of El Koma, a town in North Darfur that was under the control of the RSF (see also 2.5.8). The convoy consisted of fifteen trucks and had set out from Port Sudan to deliver supplies to the starving population of El Fasher. In total, five aid workers lost their lives. A number were also injured, and several trucks were burned out.[567] It was unclear which party was responsible for this act of violence. A local relief committee asserted that the SAF had carried out a drone attack on the convoy. The RSF and the SAF accused each other of attacking the convoy.[568]

See section 7.5 for more information on the obstruction of humanitarian aid.

5.6 Journalists

During the preceding reporting period, press freedom and critical, independent journalists came increasingly under threat. Independent journalists who reported critically on the warring parties were threatened or intimidated, arrested, detained and, in the most serious cases, killed by those parties.[569]

[562] Also referred to as the Humanitarian Affairs Commission. See https://www.hac.gov.sd/en for more information on the HAC.
[563] Sudans Post, *Sudanese Congress Party slams Khartoum authorities over crackdown on emergency aid efforts,* 15 May 2025. Al Jazeera, *Sudan's aid workers fear crackdown under strict new army rules,* 28 May 2025. Ayin Network, *Hijacking humanitarianism, How Khartoum's new authorities are cracking down on grassroots relief efforts,* 19 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[564] Confidential source, 26 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[565] See https://www.ri.org/countries/sudan/ for more information on the work of this international aid organisation in Sudan.
[566] The New York Times, *Sudanese paramilitaries kill entire clinic staff in famine-struck camp,* 12 April 2025. Darfur24, *International Relief expresses deep sorrow over killing of its workers in Zamzam camp in Darfur,* 13 April 2025. Relief International, *Zamzam Camp, Sudan, A profound tragedy for Relief International as eleven colleagues mercilessly killed,* 13 April 2025.
[567] WFP, *Joint statement on Sudan convoy attack,* 3 June 2025.
[568] CIR, *WFP/UNICEF convoy attack near Kuma,* 19 June 2025.
[569] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 58 and 59.

The aforementioned development continued during the current reporting period.[570] Between 2024 and 2025, Sudan dropped from 149th to 165th place in the World Press Freedom Index compiled by *Reporters sans frontières* (Reporters Without Borders, RSF).[571] This ranking system covers a total of 180 countries.[572]

Various figures reveal that the violence against journalists in Sudan continued. Between July 2023 and November 2024, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) documented the murders of at least seven journalists. This international press watchdog attributed four murders to the Rapid Support Force (RSF) and three to unknown armed groups.[573]

The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate (SJS), the trade union of Sudanese journalists,[574] documented the murders of twenty journalists between mid-April 2023 and December 2024. Sixteen of those murders took place during 2024.[575] In late September 2025, the same organisation reported that since the outbreak of the war, 31 journalists had been killed and more than 230 detained.[576] The reports did not reveal how many journalists had been killed as a result of targeted or random violence.

According to the database of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an American NGO dedicated to freedom of the press and journalists' rights,[577] fourteen journalists and media employees lost their lives in Sudan between April 2023 and 10 September 2025. One journalist was murdered, four lost their lives as a result of conflict-related violence[578] and four died during dangerous assignments. In this regard the term 'dangerous assignment'[579] refers to covering demonstrations, riots or mob violence, for example.[580] In five cases, the cause of the violent death was unknown.[581]

One source had knowledge of the deaths of 31 journalists between April 2023 and early May 2025. Some had died as a consequence of random conflict-related violence,[582] while others had lost their lives in detention centres of the SAF or RSF. In the latter case, the journalists had died as a result of torture or denial of medical care,[583] according to the source.[584] See section 5.4 for more information on detention conditions and instances of torture.

The Sudanese media landscape also suffered from the war situation in other ways. As a result of the wartime conditions, of the three thousand registered journalists, two thousand lost their jobs.[585] One source had knowledge of journalists who had been forced to earn a living mending shoes, selling vegetables at market stalls or farming.[586]

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[570] OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, p. 13. Columbia Journalism Review (CJR), *The hidden toll of reporting on the Sudanese Civil War,* 27 May 2025. The EastAfrican, *From Darfur to exile, Sudan journalists face war without escape,* 11 October 2025.
[571] Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is an organisation dedicated to freedom of the press. See https://rsf.org/en for more information on this international NGO.
[572] RSF, *Sudan, Country fact-file,* undated, accessed on 19 August 2025.
[573] RSF, *News media silenced and at least seven journalists killed in Sudan's two years of war,* 7 April 2025.
[574] Also known as the Sudanese Journalists Union.
[575] Moatinoon, *110 violations recorded by the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate during the year,* 31 January 2025.
[576] Darfur24, *Journalist arrested in North Kordofan over Facebook post,* 30 September 2025.
[577] See https://cpj.org for more information on the CPJ.
[578] Referred to by the CPJ as 'In Crossfire/Combat'.
[579] Referred to by the CPJ as 'On Dangerous Assignment'.
[580] CPJ, *Methodology,* undated, accessed on 12 September 2025.
[581] CPJ, *14 journalists and media workers killed in Sudan,* undated, accessed 12 September 2025.
[582] For example, indiscriminate shelling.
[583] An example would be a diabetes patient not being given insulin.
[584] Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[585] Trouw, *Waarom we zo weinig horen over de oorlog in Soedan,* 24 May 2025.
[586] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.

Before the outbreak of the war, most media buildings and training centres for media workers were concentrated in Khartoum. During the Battle for Khartoum (see 2.5.7), virtually all of those buildings were destroyed, looted or set on fire.[587] In early October 2024, the SJS reported that ninety percent of the country's media infrastructure had been destroyed.[588] FM frequencies no longer functioned and newspapers were no longer being printed. Eighty percent of the country had no internet service.[589] Only in Northern State, River Nile, Red Sea, Kassala and Blue Nile was there a slow internet connection, according to a source.[590]

In some areas, it was possible to obtain access to the internet via Starlink satellites. This could be done using a Starlink modem or from a Starlink café. However, there were risks associated with transmitting data via a Starlink connection. Some Starlink cafés were under the control of one of the warring parties and the private ownership of a Starlink modem could arouse the suspicion of the same actors.[591] Access to a Starlink connection was also expensive in Sudanese terms.[592] One hour in a Starlink café cost two thousand Sudanese pounds,[593] according to a source.[594]

Independent, critical journalists were not able to do their work openly in Sudan. The few independent, critical journalists who remained in the country did their work secretly out of necessity. Only journalists who were affiliated with one of the warring parties, and made propaganda for those parties, were able to perform their work openly. Those who expressed critical views about the warring parties risked being threatened, arrested, detained, interrogated, prosecuted (in SAF territory), kidnapped and, in the most serious cases, killed.[595]

In SAF territory, the repression of journalists and social media users (see 5.7) could take on a formal, judicial form. For instance, journalists and social media users had been arrested as a result of their reports on war crimes, battles and the humanitarian situation. They were sentenced to years in prison or sentenced to death for 'espionage' or 'treason'.[596] As far as could be ascertained, the death sentences handed down had not been carried out up to the time of writing.[597]

There were a number of topics that attracted particular negative attention from the SAF and the RSF. Below are two lists of topics that were particularly sensitive for the SAF on the one hand and the RSF on the other. These lists are not exhaustive.

In SAF territory, it was problematic and risky to report on the following topics:

- Criticism of Burhan (commander-in-chief of the SAF and chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, TSC);
- Government corruption;
- Human rights violations committed by the SAF;[598]

[587] Radio Dabanga, *Sudan's media in ruins as war silences the airwaves,* 11 May 2025.
[588] Radio Dabanga, *Sudan journalists: '90% of media infrastructure wiped out by war',* 2 October 2024.
[589] Radio Dabanga, *Sudan journalists: '90% of media infrastructure wiped out by war',* 2 October 2024. De Volkskrant, *Broodnodig nieuws voor miljoenen Soedanezen, vanuit een kleine studio in Nederland*, 5 August 2025.
[590] Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[591] Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. De Volkskrant, *Broodnodig nieuws voor miljoenen Soedanezen,* 5 August 2025.
[592] De Volkskrant, *Broodnodig nieuws voor miljoenen Soedanezen,* 5 August 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[593] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 19 August 2025, 2,000 Sudanese pounds were equivalent to 2.94 euros.
[594] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[595] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. CJR, *The hidden toll of reporting on the Sudanese Civil War,* 27 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[596] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Judicial rulings,* 24 August 2025.
[597] Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[598] For example, the violent reprisals against the Kanabi in El Gezira (see 2.5.4).

- Troop movements and recruitment/forced recruitment by the SAF (see 6.2);
- Aerial bombardments by the SAF (see 2.2.2 and 2.5.8);
- The pursuit of a peaceful solution;
- The geopolitical ties between the SAF on the one hand and Egypt and Iran on the other (see 1.6.7);
- The ties between the SAF and Islamist groups and the former Bashir regime (see 2.2.1);
- Geopolitical questions around access to the Red Sea and the Nile (see 1.6.8).

In RSF territory, it was problematic and risky to report on the following topics:

- The expression of pro-SAF sentiments;[599]
- Arms shipments via Nyala airport in South Darfur (see 2.5.8);
- The alleged Emirati arms deliveries to the RSF (see 1.6.2);
- Human rights violations committed by the RSF;
- Troop movements and recruitment/forced recruitment by the RSF (see 6.3);
- Smuggling and trade in gold, livestock and agricultural produce by the RSF.[600]

In early October 2025, the CPJ published a report about the conditions under which Sudanese journalists were carrying out their work in besieged El Fasher. For this purpose, the New York-based NGO had interviewed seven journalists who were currently in El Fasher or had lived there until recently. Like other inhabitants of the city, they had to endure bombardments and lacked aid and food. In some cases, the RSF subjected journalists to sexual violence and arrests on account of their reporting.[601]

For instance, RSF fighters forced their way into the home of a female journalist. After learning of her profession, they raped her. This was not an isolated incident. Since the outbreak of the war in April 2023, the Darfur Women Journalists Forum (DWJF) had documented the rapes of six female journalists. Four of the rapes had taken place in El Fasher. The forum emphasised that the figures were underreported, because there was a stigma attached to sexual violence and most incidents of sexual violence were not reported.[602] See section 8.3 for more information on sexual and gender-related violence.

The RSF held another female journalist in detention for 45 days because she had reported on the siege of El Fasher. During her detention, she was beaten, threatened and tortured. After her release, she ceased her journalistic activities; not so much due to the intimidation, but because she was exhausted from starvation.[603]

After the RSF captured El Fasher on 26 October 2025 (see 2.5.8), according to the CPJ, at least thirteen journalists and media workers went missing.[604] On 5 November 2025, the SJS reported that more than twenty journalists had been working in El Fasher before the city fell into the hands of the RSF. Afterwards,

[599] Examples include posting photos of Burhan and the two leaders of the Joint Force, Minawi of the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and Ibrahim of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM); see also 2.4.
[600] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 59. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[601] CPJ, *Hunted, raped, starved, Sudan's journalists under siege in El-Fasher,* 1 October 2025.
[602] CPJ, *Hunted, raped, starved,* 1 October 2025.
[603] CPJ, *Hunted, raped, starved,* 1 October 2025.
[604] CPJ, *As Sudan's El-Fasher falls, the world loses sight of its journalists,* 31 October 2025.

twelve journalists managed to safely reach Tawila. The RSF arrested five journalists and seven media workers went missing.[605]

Muammar[606] Ibrahim was one of the journalists in El Fasher who was targeted by the RSF. This prominent freelance journalist, who worked for *Al Jazeera*, reported daily from the besieged capital of North Darfur. After El Fasher was taken by the RSF, Ibrahim attempted to flee the city. RSF fighters intercepted him and posted videos showing his capture.[607] The RSF suspected Ibrahim of 'defamation', because he had used the terms 'militia' and 'Janjaweed' when referring to the force.[608]

5.7 Social media

In the preceding reporting period, the SAF and the RSF spread propaganda, disinformation and hate speech through their own channels on social media. Both parties also had teams that monitored disagreeable views and posts on social media. These related to the topics summed up in the preceding section. The SAF and RSF also checked the mobile phones of those passing checkpoints.[609]

The situation described above continued during the current reporting period.[610] Three sources asserted, independently of one another, that the SAF monitored social media on a larger scale than the RSF.[611] None of the sources quantified their assertions. One source added that the SAF had better resources than the RSF. The same source put the monitoring of social media in a historical perspective. During the anti-government protests in 2018 and 2019 (see 1.2), the Sudanese authorities, which then included the RSF, monitored social media. The warring parties built on this experience, according to the source.[612] Another source reported that social media posts were used as evidence in court cases in SAF territory.[613]

The topics on social media that attracted negative attention from the warring parties corresponded with those summed up in section 5.6.[614] See section 5.8 for more information about checks on mobile phones at checkpoints.

Below are two illustrative examples of social media users who experienced problems with the Sudanese authorities as a result of their posts on social media. These examples are not exhaustive.

[605] Moatinoon, *Sudanese Journalists Union: journalists missing in El-Fasher, others detained,* 5 November 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Five journalists detained by RSF in North Darfur's El Fasher, seven 'missing' amid media blackout,* 5 November 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese syndicate reports losing contact with seven journalists in El Fasher,* 5 November 2025.
[606] Also spelt 'Moamar'.
[607] Al Jazeera, *Sudanese journalist Muammar Ibrahim detained by RSF in el-Fasher,* 27 October 2025. CPJ, *Sudanese journalist Muammar Ibrahim detained by RSF in El-Fasher,* 27 October 2025. Darfur24, *RSF arrests Al Jazeera's journalist in El Fasher,* 27 October 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's RSF detains Al Jazeera journalist, prompting calls for release,* 28 October 2025. DNHR, *Sudanese journalist Muammar Ibrahim detained by RSF in El Fasher as violence intensifies,* 3 November 2025.
[608] Sudan Tribune, *RSF investigates detained Sudanese journalist for defamation,* 3 November 2025.
[609] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 59 and 60.
[610] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[611] Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[612] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[613] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[614] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.

On 14 June 2024, a high-ranking RSF commander named Ali Yagoub Jibril was killed in El Fasher. A woman in Kassala, an eastern city that was under the control of the SAF, posted her condolences on Facebook. She was subsequently sentenced to death for collaboration with the RSF.[615]

One source had knowledge of a person in Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan, which was under the control of the SAF, who had shared a post by another social media user. The post was about the concerning humanitarian situation in Kadugli. Thereupon, the authorities arrested the person around May 2025. The person was released in late June 2025.[616] It was unclear under what circumstances the person had been released.

The use of social media was further restricted when, on 20 July 2025, the Sudanese authorities announced that audio and video conversations via WhatsApp would be blocked indefinitely from 25 July 2025. The authorities cited national security as the reason.[617] Critics condemned the measure as a violation of freedom of expression.[618] The restriction was in force at the time of writing.[619] A source added that it was primarily being enforced in El Gezira, Sennar, Khartoum, Kordofan and White Nile. Some people were still able to conduct telephone conversations using WhatsApp, presumably via a virtual private network (VPN), according to the source.[620]

Zain is one of the biggest telecom operators in Sudan. In November 2025, the RSF-affiliated authorities in West Darfur suspended Zain's services. The authorities in West Darfur gave no reason for this measure.[621]

5.8 Checkpoints

During the preceding reporting period, Sudan experienced internal travel restrictions due to the many checkpoints set up and operated by the SAF and the RSF. There were cases of people being harassed, robbed, threatened, arrested and being subjected to enforced disappearances at checkpoints. In some cases, the negative treatment at checkpoints seemed arbitrary in nature; in other cases, it was deliberately directed at individuals.[622]

The situation described above persisted during the current reporting period. It was customary for the mobile phones of people passing them to be checked at both SAF-operated and RSF-operated checkpoints. If the security personnel at a checkpoint found sensitive information on a phone, the person in question might be beaten or arrested.[623] Examples of sensitive information might include a pro-SAF message in the case of an RSF checkpoint or a photograph of Hemedti in the case of an SAF checkpoint.[624]

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[615] Assayha, *Threatening the peaceful coexistence, SAF conduct arrests on the basis of identity,* 6 December 2024. Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[616] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[617] Darfur24, *Sudan blocks some WhatsApp services for security concerns,* 20 July 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan to block WhatsApp calls, citing national security,* 20 July 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan to block WhatsApp calls citing security concerns,* 21 July 2025.
[618] Sudan Today, *Sudan faces backlash over WhatsApp call restrictions as war continues,* 22 July 2025. Radio Tamazuj, *Rights body condemns Sudan's blocking of WhatsApp calls,* 26 July 2025.
[619] Confidential source, 9 September 2025. Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[620] Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[621] Darfur24, *Zain suspends mobile services in West Darfur,* 18 November 2025.
[622] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 60 and 61.
[623] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[624] Confidential source, 8 May 2025.

One source had knowledge of a person who was travelling from Khartoum to River Nile state. He was stopped at an SAF checkpoint and his phone was examined. The soldiers discovered a chat history with a prominent human rights defender. As a result, the person was beaten for days and detained for more than seven months. The source did not know under what circumstances the person had been released. Eventually, the person managed to reach Uganda.[625]

Even an apparently 'innocent' comment could be risky. On 19 February 2025, a student was stopped at a checkpoint near Atbara, a city in SAF territory. The security personnel found a chat conversation on his mobile phone. In it, he joked that he had joined the RSF. Thereupon he was detained, and on 31 July 2025, a court sentenced him to ten years in prison for collaboration with the RSF. Critics described the verdict as 'unjust' and 'not proportionate'.[626]

The physical characteristics and regional backgrounds of those passing checkpoints could also play a role. One source had knowledge of a bus that was stopped by five or six RSF fighters near Bara, a town in North Kordofan which at that time was under the control of the RSF (see 2.5.6). They threatened passengers, including some with 'alternative' hairstyles, such as afros and braids. Such hairstyles were associated with pro-democracy youth. In view of the fact that some pro-democracy youth had sided with the SAF (see 2.2.1), persons with 'alternative' hairstyles were regarded as suspect by the RSF. The RSF fighters confiscated the phones of passengers and forced one passenger to transfer the money in his bank account to them online.[627]

Another source had knowledge of a Zaghawa woman who passed an RSF checkpoint on the way to South Sudan in 2024. The RSF fighters at the checkpoint asked her where she was from. The woman replied that she was from El Fasher. In view of the fact that, at that moment, El Fasher was the last SAF stronghold in Darfur (see 2.5.8), she was accused of collaboration with the SAF and raped (see section 8.3 for more information on sexual violence). Eventually, the woman managed to reach Uganda.[628]

5.9 Enforced disappearances

During the preceding reporting period, the number of enforced disappearances increased sharply. Both the SAF and the RSF subjected people to enforced disappearance.[629] This development continued during the current reporting period. In particular, pro-democracy and peace activists, ERR volunteers (see section 5.5) and human rights lawyers fell victim to enforced disappearances.[630]

[625] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[626] Radio Dabanga, *Sudan student's 10-year sentence for 'a joke turned into a tragedy' denounced as 'unjust',* 3 August 2025.
[627] Confidential source, 24 March 2025.
[628] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[629] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 61 and 62.
[630] Radio Dabanga, *Rulings without lawyers, Sudan legal professionals detained,* 5 June 2024. Radio Dabanga, *ACJPS: Enforced disappearances in Sudan 'systematic and escalating',* 30 October 2024.

Various figures revealed that there were thousands of enforced disappearances.[631] The ACJPS documented 1,100 enforced disappearances between April 2023 and 26 October 2024. The ACJPS concluded that both parties were committing enforced disappearances in a 'systematic' manner.[632]

Between April 2023 and mid-February 2024, the Sudanese Group for Victims of Enforced Disappearance (SGVED) documented 993 enforced disappearances.[633] By mid-March 2025, this number had increased to over two thousand. This Sudanese human rights group pointed out that this figure was underreported. Due to electricity and internet outages, it was not easy to document enforced disappearances. Conducting research of this kind proved problematic in conflict areas. For the SGVED, it was particularly difficult to access information about enforced disappearances in Khartoum, White Nile, Darfur, Kordofan, El Gezira and Sennar.[634]

On 9 April 2025, Radhouane Nouicer, Sudan expert at the UN,[635] revealed that Sudanese human rights organisations had reported at least 3,177 enforced disappearances to him.[636] It was not clear from his statements which human rights organisations they were.

Between April 2023 and late January 2024, the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) recorded more than 104 enforced disappearances of women and girls. Most of the enforced disappearances took place in RSF territory.[637] By December 2024, the number of enforced disappearances of women and girls recorded by SIHA had risen to 236. In most cases, the RSF were responsible. SIHA emphasised that this was underreported. Shame and fear meant that not every enforced disappearance of a woman or girl was reported. In addition, it was difficult to obtain information about enforced disappearances in rural areas.[638] In 27 cases (11%), the missing woman or girl was found; in 209 cases (88%), the whereabouts of the woman or girl remained unclear.[639]

SIHA documented the highest numbers of enforced disappearances of women and girls in Khartoum and El Gezira. The table below shows the number of enforced disappearances of women and girls recorded in each state. These data were obtained from a report by SIHA published in late February 2025. Although SIHA reported 236 enforced disappearances of women and girls, the total comes to 234.[640]

[631] Radio Dabanga, *Those forcibly disappeared in the Sudan war – an open wound for thousands swallowed by absence,* 16 September 2025.
[632] Radio Dabanga, *ACJPS,* 30 October 2024.
[633] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 62.
[634] Sudan Tribune, *Forced disappearances in Sudan surge to 2,000 amid war,* 15 March 2025.
[635] Also spelt 'Radwan Nuwaiser'.
[636] Moatinoon, *UN accuses warring parties in Sudan of ignoring the fate of thousands of missing persons,* 9 April 2025.
[637] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 61.
[638] SIHA, *Unseen and unheard, The plight of missing women and girls amidst Sudan's crisis,* 25 February 2025, pp. 4 and 5.
[639] SIHA, *Unseen and unheard,* 25 February 2025, p. 11.
[640] SIHA, *Unseen and unheard,* 25 February 2025, p. 10.

Number of enforced disappearances of women and girls (April 2023 – December 2024)

State	Number of enforced disappearances of women and girls
Khartoum	96
El Gezira	79
Sennar	17
Unknown	11
North Darfur	5
White Nile	5
Kassala	4
North Kordofan	4
River Nile	4
Gedaref	3
East Darfur	2
South Darfur	1
West Darfur	1
South Kordofan	1
Northern State	1
Total	**234**

Source: SIHA.

See section 8.3 for more information on conflict-related sexual violence and gender-related violence against women and girls.

5.10 Inter-ethnic relations and interactions

As explained in section 1.1, the Sudanese population consists of different population groups that identify as 'African' or 'Arab', or are referred to as such.

In the preceding reporting period, the RSF and the militias linked with the RSF targeted African population groups in Darfur, in particular the Masalit in West Darfur.[641] During the current reporting period, ethnically motivated violence also took place against specific communities. For instance, the SAF and their affiliated militias targeted the Kanabi in El Gezira (see 2.5.4). The RSF again committed violence against African population groups in Darfur, in particular against the Zaghawa in North Darfur (see 2.5.8).

As far as could be ascertained, no killings of Masalit took place in West Darfur in the current reporting period.[642] Two sources indicated that most Masalit had since fled to (eastern) Chad (see section 11.4 for more information on the situation of Sudanese refugees in Chad). According to both sources, the RSF regarded their campaign of violence against the Masalit in West Darfur as 'complete', and at the time of writing they were primarily targeting the Zaghawa in North Darfur.[643]

[641] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 36-40.
[642] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[643] Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.

The consulted sources made conflicting statements as to whether Masalit were also at risk outside West Darfur. Two sources were of the opinion that they were not,[644] with one of them asserting that the violence against the Masalit in 2023 had specifically taken place within the historical and regional context of West Darfur.[645] Another source, by contrast, had knowledge of a Masalit family in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, that had been targeted in 2024. The RSF took the woman as a concubine and held the man in detention for six months. Eventually, the man was released. At the time of writing, the whereabouts of the man were unknown, according to the source.[646]

It is not easy for outsiders to distinguish members of different population groups, such as Masalit and Arabs, from one another.[647] The actors of persecution used different perceptions and criteria to identify particular population groups. In this regard, 'criteria' may include language, accent and place of residence. Below is a summary of perceptions and criteria that actors of persecution used to identify their targets. This COI Report does not in any way claim that it is possible to determine a person's ethnicity in an objective and verifiable manner. The following summary of perceptions and criteria is intended to help understand how actors of persecution identified particular persons and groups as targets. This summary should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

- Clothing, for example the type of footwear and the way in which a turban is wrapped;[648]
- A person's place of residence;[649]
- Language, accent and/or dialect;[650]
- Skin colour and facial features;[651]
- Ritual scars;[652]
- Livelihood.[653]

The above perceptions and criteria require further clarification. Each criterion is explained and, where necessary, nuanced, below.

Clothing

One source explained that a particular type of sandals, so-called 'leopard slippers',[654] are associated with wealthy Arabs in the border region between Darfur and eastern Chad.[655]

Place of residence

In the border region between Darfur and eastern Chad, Arabs and Masalit live in different villages. Although there are no visible demarcations between those villages, the inhabitants know which community lives in which village.[656]

[644] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[645] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[646] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[647] Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, p. 70.
[648] Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 271 and 272.
[649] Confidential source, 30 March 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[650] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[651] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[652] Hari, *De tolk,* published in 2008, p. 17. Confidential source, 24 July 2025. Confidential source, 25 July 2025. Confidential source, 25 July 2025.
[653] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[654] Known in French as *vrai leopard*.
[655] Confidential source, 30 March 2025.
[656] Confidential source, 30 March 2025.

Elsewhere in Sudan, communities also live separately from one another. In subsection 2.5.4, it was noted that the Kanabi in El Gezira lived in their own villages. When the SAF and their affiliated militias targeted the Kanabi, they knew which villages to go to. It is also known which villages Darfuri migrants in El Gezira live in.[657] In Khartoum it is also known in which neighbourhoods IDPs from Darfur and Kordofan live.[658]

Language, accent and/or dialect

Most Sudanese speak Arabic, but a person's vocabulary, accent and pronunciation can reveal which region the speaker is from or which population group they belong to. In addition, most Sudanese of African origin also speak an African language, such as Masalit or Zaghawa, alongside Arabic.[659]

Skin colour and facial features

In general, inhabitants with roots in the west and south of Sudan have a darker skin colour than their compatriots from the north, centre and east of the country.[660] A dark or black skin colour is generally associated with Sudanese of African origin.[661] However, one source emphasised that this perception can lead to confusion. For instance, there are people living in East Darfur who have a darker skin colour than 'African' Sudanese but who identify as 'Arabs', according to the source.[662]

Ritual scars

In some communities, it is customary to apply ritual scars to the cheeks, forehead, lips or temples. As a result, the bearers of such scars may be recognised as belonging to those communities.[663] Two sources added that the practice of ritual scarification is declining, particularly among urban youth, and that this criterion is primarily applicable to older people.[664]

Livelihoods

As stated in section 1.1 and subsection 2.5.8, in the Darfuri context, (nomadic) livestock farming is mainly associated with 'Arabs' and arable farming with 'Africans'. However, this perception does not always correspond with how communities identify or are referred to. For instance, the Zaghawa, who are known as an 'African' population group, also engage in livestock farming.[665]

5.11 Religious minorities

During the preceding reporting period, there were no reports of apostate Muslims, non-practising Muslims, atheists and people of other faiths (including Christians) being actively persecuted because of their religious or philosophical beliefs. Attacks on churches and monasteries did not originate from anti-Christian elements but

[657] Confidential source, 10 April 2025.
[658] Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[659] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[660] Confidential source, 1 May 2025.
[661] Confidential source, 10 April 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[662] Confidential source, 10 April 2025.
[663] Hari, *De tolk,* published in 2008, p. 17. Confidential source, 24 July 2025. Confidential source, 25 July 2025. Confidential source, 25 July 2025.
[664] Confidential source, 25 July 2025. Confidential source, 25 July 2025.
[665] Hari, *De tolk,* published in 2008, p. 9. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.

were part of the general war situation. As such, mosques were equally likely to be affected by conflict-related violence.[666]

The above situation persisted into the current reporting period. As far as could be ascertained, during the reporting period, no persons were actively persecuted on the grounds of their religious or philosophical convictions.[667]

During the reporting period, reports did appear of places of worship being affected by conflict-related violence. For instance, on 11 June 2025, buildings including a Roman Catholic church in El Fasher were hit by RSF shelling. In the incident, the pastor of the church, Luka Jomo, was seriously injured and died of his injuries the following day.[668] According to a source, the church building and the pastor were hit by indiscriminate shelling.[669]

On 8 July 2025, bulldozers knocked down a Pentecostal church in Khartoum on the orders of the authorities. The destruction of the church took place under the gaze of both the army and the police. According to the authorities, the church in question had been built illegally. Reportedly, the church community were not informed about the demolition beforehand and were not able to remove objects from the building in time.[670]

[666] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 63 and 64.
[667] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[668] Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), *Rapid Support Forces bomb three churches in El Fasher,* 18 June 2025. SUNA, *Al-Dagalo terrorist militia assassinates Catholic Church pastor in El-Fashir,* 23 June 2025.
[669] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[670] Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese party condemns church demolition in Khartoum,* 12 July 2025. Open Doors, *Church in Sudan demolished – and more might follow,* 15 July 2025.

6 Compulsory military service and recruitment/forced recruitment

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines compulsory military service and recruitment/forced recruitment in more detail. In formal terms, the Sudan National Service Act of 1992 was still in force. During the reporting period, however, this law was not actively applied and enforced by the Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC) and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) under Burhan.[671]

During the reporting period, both the SAF and the RSF recruited civilians. In some cases, the warring parties resorted to forced recruitment. It was not known how many civilians were forcibly recruited.[672] One source indicated that the RSF used forced recruitment on a larger scale than the SAF, but was not able to substantiate this assertion with quantitative data.[673]

Section 6.2 deals with recruitment/forced recruitment by the SAF. Section 6.3 considers recruitment/forced recruitment by the RSF. Section 6.4 discusses the use of child soldiers. Little public information was available on recruitment/forced recruitment and the use of child soldiers in Sudan. For this reason, most of the information in this chapter is from confidential sources.

6.2 Recruitment/forced recruitment by the SAF

During the preceding reporting period, the Sudanese authorities began a mobilisation campaign known as the Armed Popular Resistance (in Arabic, *Al Moqawwma Al Sha'abyya Al Mosallaha*).[674] Thousands of men in SAF territory answered the call to arms in order to halt the RSF advance. They were referred to as mustanfareen ('the mobilised').[675]

During the reporting period, the authorities continued to urge civilians to take up arms against the RSF as part of the 'armed people's resistance'.[676] Recruiters, who had close links with the authorities, handed out weapons, ammunition, food and money to civilians who joined the fight against the RSF.[677] The mustanfareen played a significant role in the recapture of El Gezira (see 2.5.4) and Khartoum (see 2.5.7).[678]

The Sudanese authorities used various techniques during their mobilisation campaign. In some SAF areas, they sought to instil fear into civilians by saying they would be slaughtered by the RSF if they did not take up arms. Given the situation, civilians felt compelled to heed the call to mobilise, according to a source.[679]

[671] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 66. Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[672] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[673] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[674] During the period of Bashir's rule (1989-2019), the Sudanese authorities also mobilised a 'people's army'. This was known as the Popular Defence Forces, *Muqawama Sha'abia* in Arabic. Africa Intelligence, *El Fasher siege strains Burhan's Alliance with militias,* 7 May 2025.
[675] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 66.
[676] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[677] Africa Intelligence, *El Fasher siege strains Burhan's Alliance with militias,* 7 May 2025.
[678] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[679] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.

According to another source, the authorities also used explicit coercion to recruit civilians. For example, community leaders and clan heads were ordered to supply ten to twenty recruits to the military authorities.[680]

In theory, the Sudanese authorities could track down and prosecute deserters. As far as could be ascertained, during the reporting period there were no reports of deserting SAF soldiers who had been tracked down and persecuted.[681]

6.3 Recruitment/forced recruitment by the RSF

After receiving setbacks in El Gezira (see 2.5.4) and Khartoum (see 2.5.7), media reports appeared that the RSF were using enforced recruitment in order to compensate for their loss of troops. According to the Sudan Doctors Network (SDN), in late May 2025, the RSF apprehended 178 civilians in El Daein, the capital of East Darfur. They were given the choice of either joining the RSF or paying a ransom for their release. Otherwise, they faced a spell in a detention centre.[682]

The RSF used various techniques during their recruitment campaign. In some cases, they offered civilians who were leading a marginal economic existence the prospect of financial benefits. Some civilians subsequently accepted the RSF's offer because they saw no other way of earning a living, according to a source.[683] In other cases, the recruitment of civilians took place under physical duress.[684]

One source had heard of RSF fighters deserting and escaping to South Sudan. In response, the RSF had closed the border between South Darfur and South Sudan and intercepted the deserters. It was not known what subsequently happened to the arrested deserters, according to the source.[685]

The Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR)[686] reported that the RSF had apprehended 65 young men at checkpoints north and west of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, between 15 and 23 October 2025. They were handed weapons and immediately thrown into battle against the SAF. Most of the young men did not survive their baptism of fire, according to the DNHR. This Darfuri human rights organisation based its report on testimonies from sources on the ground.[687]

6.4 Recruitment/forced recruitment of child soldiers

Child soldiers have long been used in armed conflicts in Sudan. During the preceding reporting period, both the SAF and the RSF used child soldiers.[688] This situation remained unchanged in the current reporting period.[689]

[680] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[681] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[682] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's RSF detain civilians, offers fight-or-pay ultimatum – doctors group,* 28 May 2025. Ayin Network, *Rapid Support Forces resort to forced recruitment campaigns,* 26 June 2025.
[683] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[684] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[685] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[686] The DNHR is a Kampala-based human rights organisation that monitors human rights violations in Darfur. See https://dnhr.org for more information on the DNHR.
[687] DNHR, *RSF captures and forces youth to fight in El Fasher, North Darfur,* 25 October 2025.
[688] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 67. Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (RWCHR), *A war on children, A world complicit, Legal analysis of atrocities against children in Sudan,* October 2025, p. 37.
[689] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, p. 7.

In October 2025, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (RWCHR), a Canadian human rights organisation,[690] reported that the recruitment of child soldiers was 'widespread' and 'systematic',[691] without further quantifying this conclusion. The same NGO reported that the RSF were recruiting child soldiers on a larger scale than the SAF. Recruitment of child soldiers was concentrated in RSF areas in Darfur and Kordofan. Among the mustanfareen, who fought on the side of the SAF, there were also minors, according to the RWCHR.[692]

Two sources confirmed that the RSF were using child soldiers on a larger scale than the SAF. They based their assertions on RSF videos that mostly showed young fighters.[693] Based on such footage, one source estimated that eighty percent of RSF fighters consisted of individuals in their teens and twenties.[694] The source did not break down this percentage into minors and adults.

In late September 2025, the independent news platform *Darfur24* reported that the RSF had recruited between 350 and 400 miners in South Darfur. These recruits were aged between seventeen and twenty. Due to the rainy season, their work in the gold mines had temporarily halted.[695] The article made no mention of physical coercion in the recruitment of the young men.

In October 2025, *The Guardian*, a British daily, published the account of a Colombian mercenary serving under the flag of the RSF. The man related that he and his fellow Colombian mercenaries had trained thousands of RSF recruits, and stated that most of the recruits were minors.[696] See subsection 2.3.1 for more information on the deployment of Colombian mercenaries.

[690] The RWCHR is known in French as the *Centre Raoul Wallenberg pour les droits de la personne*. See https://raoulwallenbergcentre.org/en/ for more information on this centre.
[691] RWCHR, *A war on children,* October 2025, pp. 37 and 40.
[692] RWCHR, *A war on children,* October 2025, pp. 16, 37, 38 and 40.
[693] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[694] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[695] Darfur24, *RSF recruits miners to joining fighting in Darfur,* 28 September 2025.
[696] The Guardian, *'War is a business',* 8 October 2025.

7 Humanitarian situation

7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the humanitarian situation in Sudan. Section 7.2 discusses the extent of displacement in Sudan and the security situation and living conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Section 7.3 examines the cholera outbreak that afflicted the country. Section 7.4 deals with the escalating food crisis in the country. Section 7.5 details what aid was still reaching Sudan and how the warring parties were impeding the humanitarian relief effort. Section 7.6 considers the collapsed health sector. Section 7.7 explains the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Sudan, in particular that of South Sudanese, Ethiopians and Eritreans.

In this chapter, the term 'IDPs' refers to Sudanese who have been displaced in Sudan. 'Refugees', by contrast, refers to non-Sudanese, for example an Eritrean who was registered as a refugee in Sudan.

Each year, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an international aid organisation, publishes the Emergency Watchlist report.[697] In this report, the IRC assesses which twenty countries are most at risk of a humanitarian emergency. As in 2024,[698] the IRC put Sudan in first place on the Emergency Watchlist for 2025. The committee did so on the basis of factors including extensive displacement (see 7.2), the escalating food crisis (see 7.4), the large-scale violence (see 2.5 and Chapter 3) and the fact that 30.4 million people, i.e. 64% of the population, were in urgent need of humanitarian aid. In quantitative terms, Sudan was the scene of the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world, according to the IRC.[699]

Four UN agencies described the humanitarian crisis in Sudan as 'one of the world's most severe emergencies'.[700] On 12 November 2025, the UN revealed that two in three people in Sudan were in need of humanitarian aid.[701]

The context was too dynamic to enable the humanitarian situation to be described per state. Moreover, the situation could differ sharply within the same state, depending on the area or community. For instance, one source indicated that in the eastern state of Gedaref, the humanitarian situation for displaced persons was more serious than for host communities, and that living conditions were somewhat better in urban areas than in rural areas.[702] Nevertheless, in the reporting period there was sufficient information available to obtain an overall view of the humanitarian situation in Sudan, as explained in more detail below.

[697] See https://www.rescue.org/eu/country/sudan for more information on the work of the IRC in Sudan.
[698] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 69.
[699] IRC, *2025 Emergency Watchlist, A world out of balance,* 11 December 2024, pp. 32 and 33.
[700] International Organization for Migration (IOM), *IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP urge immediate action to address escalating humanitarian crisis in Sudan,* 22 October 2025.
[701] The Independent, *Sudan's worsening situation leaves 2 out of every 3 people in need of aid, UN official says,* 13 November 2025.
[702] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.

7.2 Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

In the preceding reporting period, Sudan was the scene of the biggest displacement crisis in the world.[703] The displacement crisis persisted into the current reporting period. Before the current war in Sudan broke out in April 2023, the country numbered approximately 2.39 million displaced persons. Between April 2023, and 9 July 2025, they were joined by approximately 7.66 million additional displaced persons. As a result, on 9 July 2025, Sudan numbered more than ten million displaced persons.[704] In August 2025, the number of displaced persons rose to over 11.5 million.[705]

One source remarked that the above numbers could not be regarded as definitive. For example, in the Nuba mountains of South Kordofan, so many people had been displaced in a number of waves that the difference between displaced persons and host communities had seemingly disappeared.[706]

Below is a table showing the number of IDPs per state, as documented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN refugee agency. The table compares the number of displaced persons per state in the current reporting period[707] with that in the preceding reporting period.[708]

Number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in each state

State	Number of displaced persons on 31 December 2023	Number of displaced persons on 9 July 2025
South Darfur	1,606,195	1,842,960
North Darfur	1,145,022	1,794,860
Central Darfur	794,031	970,797
East Darfur	766,845	802,944
River Nile	682,755	585,975
White Nile	538,280	543,761
Northern State	389,600	530,127
Gedaref	396,527	475,315
Blue Nile	419,451	405,553
West Kordofan	251,450	395,260
South Kordofan	347,283	392,118
West Darfur	261,791	347,342
Khartoum	37,870[709]	230,326
North Kordofan	178,638	218,478
Red Sea	234,000	178,582
El Gezira	518,711	139,842
Kassala	159,832	118,605
Sennar	477,197	92,484
Total	**9,205,478**	**10,065,329**

[703] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 69.
[704] UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Sudan*, last updated on 9 July 2025, accessed on 25 August 2025.
[705] IOM, *Sudan Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA), August 2025,* 23 October 2025, p. 1.
[706] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[707] UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Sudan*, last updated on 9 July 2025, accessed on 25 August 2025.
[708] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 69.
[709] This number dates from 29 January 2024.

Source: UNHCR.

Large numbers of IDPs moved to the states in the north and east of Sudan, where there was relatively little fighting (see 2.5.1 and Chapter 3). These states were under the control of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF).[710] The Jebel Marra mountains in central Darfur, which were under the control of the neutral Sudan Liberation Army of Abdel Wahid (SLA/AW), received many IDPs who had fled the violence in North Darfur (see 2.5.8).[711]

IDPs in the west of Sudan faced greater security risks than IDPs in the east of the country, because the former were closer to or in between the front lines.[712] For instance, the inhabitants of Zamzam and Abu Shouk, two IDP camps in North Darfur, found themselves directly on the front line during the reporting period (see 2.5.8).[713] The eastern part of Sudan, by contrast, remained free from large-scale ground battles and fluctuating front lines in the reporting period (see 2.5.1 and chapter 3).

As in the preceding reporting period,[714] living conditions for the IDPs were poor, in both the west and the east. There was a severe lack of food, hygiene, healthcare and education. An example was Tawila, a town in North Darfur that was under the control of the neutral SLA/AW. Between April and 11 July 2025, nearly 379,000 people fled to Tawila as a result of the heavy fighting in El Fasher and Zamzam (see 2.5.8). In June 2025, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)[715] stated that there was a severe lack of shelter, water, sanitation, food and education in Tawila. As a result, cholera broke out among the displaced population (see section 7.3).[716]

In the eastern states, too, IDPs lived in appalling conditions. While displaced persons in the west of the country lived mainly in camps, displaced persons in the east mostly found temporary accommodation in school buildings or with host communities. In view of rising inflation and food insecurity (see 7.4), it was becoming ever harder for host communities to cope with the influx of displaced persons.[717]

7.3 Cholera

In the preceding reporting period, cholera broke out in Sudan.[718] This infectious disease, which is transmitted through the consumption of contaminated water and food, continued to rage during the reporting period. By September 2025, cholera had spread to all eighteen states.[719] The epicentre of the cholera outbreak was in El Gezira, Gedaref, Khartoum and White Nile. According to the Sudanese health authorities, between July 2024 and July 2025, more than 83,000 cholera infections were recorded, of which more than 32,000 in 2025. In the same period, more than

[710] Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[711] Al Jazeera, *Landslide kills more than 1,000 in Sudan's Darfur region, armed group says,* 2 September 2025. BBC, *Hundreds killed in Sudan landslide, UN says,* 3 September 2025.
[712] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 70 and 71. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[713] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[714] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 70.
[715] Known as *Flyktninghjelpen* in Norwegian. See https://www.nrc.no/countries/africa/sudan for more information on the work of the NRC in Sudan.
[716] NRC, *Suda, Surge in Darfur displacement pushes Tawila into full-scale crisis, cholera spreading,* 11 July 2025.
[717] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 70 and 71. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[718] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 71 and 72.
[719] UN, *Sudan war, Lifesaving cholera vaccination campaign begins in Darfur,* 23 September 2025.

2,100 people died of cholera.[720] Between July 2024 and 23 September 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO)[721] reported over 113,600 cholera infections and more than 3,000 cholera-related deaths.[722]

The table below provides an overview of the number of cholera-related deaths in each state, as recorded by the Sudanese authorities. Central Darfur is not included in this overview.

Number of cholera-related fatalities per state (July 2024 – July 2025)

State	Number of cholera-related fatalities
White Nile	432
Khartoum	408
El Gezira	238
Gedaref	225
North Kordofan	224
Sennar	202
Kassala	200
River Nile	83
Northern State	29
Red Sea	25
South Darfur	24
East Darfur	15
South Kordofan	11
Blue Nile	6
North Darfur	1
West Kordofan	1
West Darfur	0
Total	**2,124**

Source: Sudanese health authorities.

The ongoing cholera outbreak was connected with the displacement crisis (see 7.2), the collapsed health sector (see 7.6) and drone attacks on power stations (see 2.3.2), as a result of which water treatment plants and hospitals were no longer functioning properly.[723] In this regard, one source reported that there were between three and five treatment centres for cholera, each with twenty beds, for the whole of Khartoum, with its population of many millions. These centres only treated patients for a fee, they suffered from a shortage of medicines and the quality of the care provided was inadequate.[724]

[720] OCHA, *Sudan, Cholera operational update,* 3 July 2025, p. 1.
[721] The WHO has a page specifically dedicated to Sudan: https://www.who.int/countries/sdn.
[722] UN, *Lifesaving cholera vaccination campaign begins in Darfur,* 23 September 2025.
[723] Sudans Post, *RSF drone strike damages key power infrastructure in Sudan's Meroe,* 9 April 2025. UN, *Sudan drone attacks raise fears for civilian safety and aid efforts,* 5 May 2025. Al Jazeera, *Sudan says cholera outbreak killed 172 people in a week,* 27 May 2025. BBC, *Sudan 'on brink' of health crisis with cholera outbreak,* 27 May 2025. NOS, *Cholera-uitbraak in Sudan leidt tot ruim 170 doden in een week,* 27 May 2025. The Independent, *What to know about a cholera outbreak in Sudan that has killed over 170 people,* 28 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Soedanezen drinken uit bron waarin een dode lag,* 15 August 2025.
[724] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.

7.4 Food crisis

As a result of the conflict, a food crisis developed during the preceding reporting period. In February 2024, eighteen million people in Sudan, or forty percent of the population, were facing acute food insecurity.[725] The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the international food monitor of the UN, estimated that in September 2025, 21.2 million people in Sudan, or 45% of the population, were suffering from acute food insecurity. Of those, 375,000 people were facing famine,[726] the most severe level of food insecurity.[727]

In particular in Kordofan, the Nuba mountains and Darfur, there was a serious food crisis.[728] The map in section 14.3 shows which the stage of food insecurity each area of Sudan was in as of September 2025. Particularly in the besieged cities, such as El Fasher in North Darfur (see 2.5.8) and Kadugli and Dilling in South Kordofan (see 2.5.9), the food situation was becoming critical. In early November 2025, the IPC reported that there was a state of famine in El Fasher and Kadugli.[729] In Dilling, the IPC did not declare a state of famine due to a lack of available information.[730]

The siege by the Rapid Support Force (RSF) made El Fasher inaccessible to emergency relief and food prices were spiralling.[731] For instance, in late July 2025, a sack of millet cost 1,200 US dollars.[732] The same price was being charged for a sack of lentils, known locally as *Adasia*.[733] Towards the end of the reporting period, food stocks in El Fasher had dwindled to such an extent that food was simply no longer obtainable in the market. As a result, the starving inhabitants of El Fasher were forced to eat animal feed meant for cattle and camels.[734] The consumption of this feed resulted in food poisoning and diarrhoea.[735] In some cases, even animal feed was unobtainable. In October 2025, between three and five community kitchens were able to operate on a daily basis, whereas thousands of civilians were dependent on them.[736]

Below are some quantitative data that make clear the seriousness of the food crisis in El Fasher. These examples are provided solely for illustrative purposes and should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

[725] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 72.
[726] IPC, *Sudan, IPC Acute food insecurity, September 2025 – May 2026*, published on 3 November 2025, p. 1.
[727] The IPC divides food crises into different phases. 'Famine' represents a worsening compared to 'acute food insecurity'. IPC, *The IPC acute food insecurity scale,* undated, accessed on 9 September 2025. The IPC refers to famine if at least twenty percent of the population has no access to food, one in three children are suffering from acute malnutrition and two people per ten thousand people die of starvation every day. NOS, *Rode Kruis: 'historisch aantal gewapende conflicten', nieuw gironummer geopend,* 24 November 2025.
[728] Ayin Network, *Five areas in Sudan face famine, five other areas in North Darfur may soon follow,* 29 January 2025. The Independent, *Driven to starvation, Sudanese people eat weeds and plants to survive as war rages,* 28 June 2025. IOM, *Sudan Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA),* 23 October 2025, p. 1. IPC, *Sudan, IPC Acute food insecurity,* published on 3 November 2025, p. 1.
[729] IPC, *Sudan, IPC Acute food insecurity,* published on 3 November 2025, pp. 1 and 2.
[730] NOS, *Tientallen meldingen over kinderen die overlijden door honger in Sudan,* 22 November 2025.
[731] Darfur24, *El Fasher residents face starvation as food prices soar under RSF siege,* 25 September 2025.
[732] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 25 August 2025, 1,200.00 US dollars were equivalent to 1,033.77 euros.
[733] ACJPS, *North Darfur, Deep concern over the continued violation of the rights of civilians in El Fasher,* 29 July 2025, p. 2.
[734] The feed in question was *ambaz*, an oil cake made from peanut shells. Sudan Tribune, *El Fasher governor pleads for end to siege as residents eat animal feed,* 27 July 2025. Al Jazeera, *'We're suffering', People in Sudan el-Fasher eat animal fodder to survive,* 4 August 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Surviving on ambaz in North Darfur – when animal fodder becomes food for people,* 4 August 2025. Trouw, *In uitgehongerd Al-Fashir hebben mensen geen energie meer om hun doden te eren,* 23 August 2025. NRC, *In dit 'epicentrum van kinderleed', eet men diervoeder om te overleven,* 1 September 2025. RTL Nieuws, *Het vergeten front van de Soedan-oorlog,* 4 September 2025. The New York Times, *Starving children eat animal feed in besieged Sudanese city,* 15 September 2025.
[735] CPJ, *Hunted, raped, starved,* 1 October 2025.
[736] Ayin Network, *Community kitchens, The arteries of life are cut off in El Fasher,* 18 October 2025.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on 5 October 2025, 413,454 civilians remained in El Fasher.[737] On 11 August 2025, the UN revealed that in the space of one week, more than sixty people had died in El Fasher from malnutrition.[738] On 26 August 2025, UNICEF reported that around six thousand children were suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Without therapeutic food and medical treatment, this group of children were at increased risk of starving to death, according to UNICEF.[739]

The Sudan Doctors Network (SDN) reported that in September 2025, 23 people had died in El Fasher from malnutrition, including 5 pregnant women.[740] On 24 October 2025, the SDN revealed that at least three children died from starvation in El Fasher every day.[741]

According to the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), a Sudanese government commission, between late August and 18 October 2025, at least 171 children and 58 elderly people died of starvation in El Fasher.[742]

On 20 October, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), a human rights organisation, reported that more than 346 children were at risk of dying in El Fasher as a result of malnutrition and starvation.[743]

The cities of Kadugli and Dilling were under the control of the SAF and were being besieged by the RSF and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) during the reporting period. As in El Fasher, serious food shortages developed and food prices rose in both cities. For instance, in Kadugli a sack of onions cost 56.00 US dollars[744] and a kilo of rice sold for 22.00 dollars.[745] In Dilling, the inhabitants were forced to eat grass and wild plants.[746] The SDN reported that between 20 October and 20 November 2025, 23 children had died in Kadugli and Dilling of malnutrition and a lack of medicines.[747]

Worrying reports about the consequences of the food crisis also appeared from other parts of Sudan. Those reports made it clear that children in particular were vulnerable.

In March 2025, nineteen children died of malnutrition in Kalma, an IDP camp in South Darfur.[748] In April and May 2025, twenty children died of malnutrition in Tawila and the surrounding area, located in central Darfur.[749] On 29 July 2025, the SDN reported that thirteen children had died of malnutrition in Lagawa, an IDP camp in East Darfur.[750] Local sources told the independent news platform *Darfur24*

[737] IOM, *Focused flash alert, Al Fasher, North Darfur,* 5 October 2025, p. 1.
[738] UN, *Daily press briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General,* 11 August 2025.
[739] UNICEF, *After 500 days under siege, children in Sudan's Al Fasher face starvation, mass displacement, and deadly violence – UNICEF,* 26 August 2025.
[740] Radio Dabanga, *Dozens dead from hunger and disease as devastation decimates North Darfur,* 29 September 2025.
[741] Sudan Tribune, *Three children die daily from hunger in Sudan's besieged El Fasher, doctors say,* 24 October 2025.
[742] Sudan Tribune, *Hunger kills 171 children in Sudan's besieged El Fasher, report says,* 18 October 2025.
[743] ACJPS, *North Darfur, Over 346 children face imminent risk of death due to starvation and malnutrition in El-Fashir City,* 20 October 2025.
[744] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 25 August 2025, 56.00 US dollars were equivalent to 48.24 euros.
[745] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 25 August 2025, 22.00 US dollars were equivalent to 18.95 euros.
[746] Darfur24, *Famine looms in Kadugli, South Kordofan,* 9 July 2025. Darfur24, *Blockade forces residents of Deling, South Kordofan, to eat grass to stave off hunger,* 29 July 2025. Ayin Network, *South Kordofan, Thousands face starvation in Kadugli and Delling with access routes cut off,* 17 August 2025.
[747] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan civil groups report thousands shot in El Fasher, warn of starvation,* 21 November 2025. NOS, *Tientallen meldingen over kinderen die overlijden door honger in Sudan,* 22 November 2025.
[748] Darfur24, *19 children die of malnutrition in Kalma IDP Camp, South Darfur,* 23 April 2025.
[749] Sudan Tribune, *Twenty children die from malnutrition in Sudan's North Darfur,* 4 June 2025.
[750] BBC, *Medics say more than dozen children in Darfur camp have died because of food shortages,* 30 July 2025.

that between August and October 2025, 'several' pregnant women and children had died of malnutrition in Kalma.[751]

A study by the international charity organisation CARE[752] similarly highlighted the impact that the conflict was having on food supplies in Darfur and Kordofan. Between 21 March and 15 April 2025, CARE held a survey among 492 farmers in East Darfur, South Darfur and South Kordofan. 89% of the farmers said their harvests had decreased and 55.7% reported that they were unable to bring in their harvests due to insecurity.[753]

In September 2025, the Islamic aid organisation Islamic Relief[754] conducted a survey among 585 households in four areas, namely Al Fao and Al Fashaga in Gedaref and Golo and Nertiti in Central Darfur. Of the 585 households surveyed, 83% had insufficient food and 17% had sufficient food. The same study revealed that 27% of households had no food stocks at all and that 25% had food to last less than one week.[755]

7.5 Humanitarian aid and obstruction of humanitarian aid

In the preceding reporting period, humanitarian aid was obstructed by both the SAF and the RSF. The obstruction of aid took various forms. For example, in SAF territory, food convoys were halted and foreign employees of international aid organisations found it almost impossible to obtain visas from the Sudanese authorities in Port Sudan. The RSF regularly looted aid supplies and extorted aid workers at checkpoints.[756]

The situation described above persisted into the current reporting period.[757] Control over humanitarian aid was part of the power struggle between the SAF and the RSF. For instance, the SAF impeded access by humanitarian aid workers to the famine-hit areas of Darfur and Kordofan that were under the control of the RSF (see section 7.4). Due to the fact that the RSF drew their support largely from Darfur and Kordofan (see 2.3.1), the SAF regarded these regions as pro-RSF. The SAF sought to weaken the RSF and their support base by obstructing humanitarian aid.[758]

In view of the uncooperative attitude of the SAF and the RSF towards international aid organisations, on 26 June 2024, independent UN human rights experts concluded that both parties were using starvation as a weapon of war.[759] The UN human rights experts did not state in which areas and/or regions starvation was being used as a weapon of war. The non-cooperative stance of the SAF and the RSF is described in more detail below.

In SAF territory, the humanitarian sector was overseen by the HAC. This government commission had long had a problematic relationship with the aid sector. It had a tendency of creating bureaucratic obstacles for aid organisations. Viewed in

[751] Darfur24, *Malnutrition claims lives of pregnant women and children in Kalma Camp,* 28 October 2025.
[752] See https://www.care.org/our-work/where-we-work/sudan/ for more information on the work of CARE in Sudan.
[753] CARE, *Conflict, agriculture, and women in Sudan, Research brief,* 4 September 2025, pp. 1 and 2.
[754] Islamic Relief was set up in 1984 in response to the famine in the Horn of Africa. This aid and charity organisation works in more than forty countries from its base in Birmingham (UK). See https://islamic-relief.org/where_we_work/sudan/ for more information on the work of Islamic Relief in Sudan.
[755] Islamic Relief, *Takaaya,* November 2025, pp. 7 and 8.
[756] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 73-75.
[757] OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, pp. 13 and 14.
[758] Confidential source, 21 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 27 October 2025.
[759] OHCHR, *Using starvation as a weapon of war in Sudan must stop: UN experts,* 26 June 2024.

this light, the goal of the HAC was to exert control over aid organisations, not to facilitate them.[760] In late September 2025, *Darfur24* reported that the HAC was frustrating the registration of Sudanese NGOs in the state of Khartoum for 'security reasons'.[761]

During the reporting period, it was alleged that the HAC was selling aid supplies on the market for financial gain. Those supplies allegedly included sacks of rice, sugar and wheat flour. Salwa Adam Benya, the commissioner of the HAC, denied the accusations.[762]

During the reporting period, it appeared that the HAC was issuing visas to foreign aid workers more easily and quickly than in the preceding reporting period.[763] For instance, on 25 June 2025, HAC commissioner Benya announced that 6,800 visas had been issued to foreign aid workers.[764] It was not clear from her statement over what time period this number of visas had been issued. One source was critical of Benya's announcement. The visas in question were single entry visas with a short period of validity, meaning that the foreign aid worker in question would have to request a new visa for a new work visit to Sudan.[765]

On 28 October 2025, the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared two senior employees of the World Food Programme (WFP)[766] *personae non gratae* (PNG).[767] They were required to leave the country within 72 hours. The authorities gave no explicit reason for the above decision. The Sudanese authorities took the decision after the WFP had reported on the grave humanitarian situation in Sudan.[768]

The counterpart of the HAC in RSF territory was known as the Sudan Agency for Relief and Humanitarian Operations (SARHO).[769] The SARHO initially adopted a more flexible and cooperative stance than the HAC, but during the reporting period this RSF aid agency sought to increase its control over the international aid organisations. Those organisations were required to register with the SARHO in order to be able to continue their work in RSF territory. However, if international aid organisations acceded to this registration requirement, they risked losing their access to SAF territory.[770]

On 17 November 2025, *Darfur24* reported that the SARHO and the civilian administration of the RSF had confiscated dozens of trucks carrying relief supplies in Nyala. Most of the trucks belonged to UN agencies and international aid organisations. The drivers had to pay a 'fee' of between five and ten million Sudanese pounds[771] before being permitted to continue their journeys.[772]

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[760] Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Ayin Network, *A wall of corruption, How Sudan's aid commission (HAC) is strangling humanitarian relief,* 14 October 2025. Confidential source, 27 October 2025.
[761] Darfur24, *Security concerns hamper NGO registration in Khartoum,* 30 September 2025.
[762] Ayin Network, *Port Sudan, Humanitarian Aid Commission accused of aid graft,* 21 August 2024.
[763] Confidential source, 1 July 2025. Confidential source, 27 November 2025.
[764] Sudans Post, *Sudan's de facto authorities push to tighten grip on humanitarian aid,* 26 June 2025.
[765] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[766] See https://www.wfp.org/countries/sudan for more information on the work of the WFP in Sudan.
[767] Singular: *persona non grata*.
[768] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan expels two senior UN World Food Programme officials,* 28 October 2025. WFP, *WFP statement regarding staff expulsions by Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs,* 29 October 2025.
[769] Radio Dabanga, *Sudan's RSF to launch own relief agency,* 13 August 2023. SARHO has its own website: https://sarhoo.org.
[770] Confidential source, 21 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[771] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 18 November 2025, 5,000,000.00 Sudanese pounds were equivalent to 736.32 euros. On the same date, 10,000,000 Sudanese pounds were equivalent to 1,472.64 euros.
[772] Darfur24, *RSF detains aid trucks in Nyala, imposes heavy fees on humanitarian deliveries,* 17 November 2025.

Some locations proved difficult or impossible for humanitarian aid to reach. This was particularly true of besieged El Fasher in North Darfur and Kadugli in South Kordofan.[773] The RSF were deliberately starving the population of El Fasher in order to break their resistance. In this regard, the UN Human Rights Council stated that the RSF were deliberately using starvation as a weapon of war, which it referred to as a 'war crime'.[774]

The warring parties deliberately targeted aid workers. For instance, in early June 2025, a UN convoy intended for the starving population of El Fasher, in North Darfur, was attacked. Five aid workers died (see section 5.5). On 20 August 2025, a drone hit a WFP aid convoy near Mellit, a town in North Darfur that was under the control of the RSF. There were no casualties among the employees in question, but three of the sixteen trucks were destroyed. The RSF and the SAF accused each other of attacking the convoy.[775]

In spite of the insecurity, some aid convoys did manage to reach areas with urgent humanitarian needs. For instance, a WFP aid convoy consisting of twelve trucks crossed the Chad-Sudan border at Adré in August 2024. The convoy was carrying relief supplies for 13,000 people in Darfur.[776]

In early May 2025, a WFP aid convoy reached El Daein, the capital of East Darfur. The convoy had entered the country via Adré.[777]

On 10 July 2025, a WFP aid convoy of 45 trucks reached Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. The convoy had taken nearly a month to complete its journey from Port Sudan.[778]

On 24 August 2025, a UNICEF aid convoy reached South Kordofan. It brought relief supplies for over 120,000 vulnerable people in Dilling and Kadugli. The cargo, which included therapeutic food, provided for the needs of the target group for a period of more than six months.[779]

In late October 2025, a UN aid convoy again reached the besieged cities of Dilling and Kadugli in South Kordofan. The convoy delivered supplies including food, blankets, sleeping mats, jerrycans, tent canvas, mosquito nets and kitchen equipment.[780]

One source observed that such successful attempts represented 'a drop in the ocean'.[781]

In view of the attacks on aid workers (see 5.5) and healthcare facilities (see 7.6), international aid organisations were sometimes forced to (temporarily) evacuate a particular location. In response to the increasing level of violence, in late February

[773] Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[774] Confidential source, 1 July 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, p. 14.
[775] Sudan Tribune, *Drone strike destroys U.N. food aid trucks in Sudan's North Darfur*, 20 August 2025. BBC, *Sudan's army denies bombing convoy taking aid to famine-hit area,* 21 August 2025. Sudans Post, *Sudan's warring sides clash over responsibility for WFP convoy strike,* 21 August 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's army denies attacking aid convoy, blames paramilitary rivals,* 21 August 2025. Al Jazeera, *Drone attack destroys UN aid convoy in Sudan's famine-hit Darfur region,* 22 August 2025. Radio Dabanga, *UN aid convoy bombed in Mellit, North Darfur – Who is responsible?,* 24 August 2025.
[776] Al Jazeera, *Aid trucks enter civil war-torn Darfur as Sudan army eases restrictions,* 22 August 2024. NOS, *Voor het eerst weer hulpgoederen in Sudanese regio Darfur*, 22 August 2025.
[777] Darfur24, *East Darfur receives humanitarian aid convoy arriving from Adre Crossing,* 7 May 2025.
[778] Darfur24, *Aid convoy arrives in Nyala after long journey from Port Sudan,* 12 July 2025.
[779] UNICEF, *After months of siege, UNICEF convoy reaches South Kordofan with lifesaving supplies for children,* 24 August 2025.
[780] WFP, *Joint UN convoy brings vital aid to besieged communities in Sudan's South Kordofan,* 30 October 2025.
[781] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.

2025, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) suspended its activities in Zamzam, a displacement camp in North Darfur.[782] After the RSF had violently taken the camp in April 2025 (see 2.5.8), the Red Cross also suspended its aid work there.[783]

On 6 November 2025, MSF withdrew its staff from certain parts of North Darfur due to the increased risk of drone attacks. This measure followed a drone attack on a hospital in Kornoi in which several patients died, including children and two pregnant women.[784] See section 7.6 for more information on attacks on healthcare facilities.

The IOM noted that the humanitarian needs were greatest in North Darfur, West Kordofan and North Kordofan, due to the conflict-related violence, the large-scale displacement of people and the collapse of services and infrastructure. In those states, access to food, shelter, healthcare, education, water and sanitation was lowest.[785] On 11 November 2025, the IOM warned that aid work in North Darfur was in danger of stalling due to the insecurity, lack of funds and dwindling stocks.[786]

International aid organisations generally had access to the northern and eastern states that were under the control of the SAF. However, a source pointed out that access did not necessarily equate to adequate aid. This was due to the fact that the international humanitarian response was hampered by a large funding shortfall.[787] As such, according to another source, there was no state in Sudan in which there was sufficient access to food and healthcare.[788] This was confirmed by the research findings of the IPC (see section 14.3).

7.6 Collapsed healthcare sector

In the preceding reporting period, the healthcare sector in Sudan was on the point of collapse. Medical facilities were being bombed from the air by the SAF or looted and shelled by the RSF. According to a research organisation,[789] 58 medical facilities were damaged or destroyed between 15 April 2023 and 6 February 2024.[790] This development continued in the current reporting period.[791]

According to the IOM, in August 2025 over seventy percent of the health infrastructure was out of service or destroyed.[792] The WHO recorded 108 attacks on medical facilities between April 2023 and mid-September 2024. The WHO estimated that seventy to eighty percent of healthcare facilities in conflict hotspots such as El Gezira (see 2.5.4), Kordofan (see 2.5.2, 2.5.6 and 2.5.9), Darfur (see 2.5.8) and Khartoum (see 2.5.7) were out of service or barely functioning. In other parts of the country, that figure was approximately 45%.[793]

[782] MSF, *MSF forced to halt activities as violence engulfs Zamzam camp in North Darfur,* 24 February 2025.
[783] NOS, *Rode Kruis staakt hulp in vluchtelingenkamp Sudan: 'Levensgevaarlijk',* 15 April 2025.
[784] Sudan Tribune, *MSF withdraws from North Darfur, fears safety after drone strikes,* 6 November 2025.
[785] IOM, *Sudan Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA),* 23 October 2025, p. 7.
[786] IOM, *IOM Chief warns of imminent catastrophe as displacement surges in North Darfur,* 11 November 2025.
[787] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[788] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[789] The research organisation in question was *Insecurity Insight*. See https://insecurityinsight.org/country-pages/sudan for more information on the findings of Insecurity Insight in relation to Sudan.
[790] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 77 and 78.
[791] Sudans Post, *War pushes Sudan's medical system to the brink,* 9 July 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, pp. 12 and 13. OHCHR, *Human rights situation in the Sudan,* 19 September 2025, p. 6.
[792] IOM, *Sudan Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA),* 23 October 2025, p. 1.
[793] WHO, *Sudan surpasses 100 attacks on healthcare since 2023 armed conflict began,* 24 September 2024.

During the reporting period, healthcare facilities regularly came under attack. Between April 2023 and October 2024, the IRC recorded 119 attacks on medical facilities.[794]

The Sudanese American Physicians Association (SAPA) and the Yale School of Public Health studied 87 hospitals in the state of Khartoum using satellite images and local sources. The SAPA and the Yale School of Public Health came to the conclusion that between 15 April 2023 and 26 August 2025, 41 out of 87 hospitals, or 47%, had been damaged as a result of conflict-related violence.[795]

Below are some examples of attacks on healthcare facilities. They are provided solely for illustrative purposes and should certainly not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 8 June 2024, RSF fighters forced their way into the Southern Hospital in El Fasher, opening fire on staff and patients. The RSF then looted the hospital. As a result of the attack, the hospital closed its doors.[796]

On 25 January 2025, the Saudi Hospital in El Fasher was hit by a drone. Approximately seventy people were killed. The RSF and the SAF accused each other of attacking the hospital. It was one of the few functioning hospitals in the whole of Darfur.[797]

On 30 May 2025, the RSF carried out a drone attack on a hospital in El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan. According to Emergency Lawyers, at least six people were killed and at least fifteen injured. Due to the damage caused, the hospital had to suspend its operations indefinitely.[798]

On 21 June 2025, the Al Muljad hospital in West Kordofan came under attack by the SAF. More than forty people were killed and dozens injured. The SAF reportedly bombed the hospital because wounded RSF fighters were being treated there.[799]

On 8 May 2025, the RSF carried out grenade shelling of a hospital in El Fasher. It was one of the last remaining healthcare facilities in the city. According to the SDN, at least twelve people were killed and seventeen injured in the attack. The injured included a doctor and a nurse.[800] The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported at least thirteen dead.[801]

[794] IRC, *Emergency Watchlist 2025,* 11 December 2024, p. 32.
[795] SAPA and Yale School of Public Health, *Widespread damage to healthcare facilities in Khartoum State, Sudan,* 10 December 2024, pp. 3, 7, 14, 15, 17 and 18.
[796] Radio Dabanga, *Hospital and camp hit in lethal North Darfur fighting,* 9 June 2024. Al Jazeera, *Sudan paramilitary RSF targets last operating hospital in Darfur,* 10 June 2024. BBC, *Last civilian hospital in besieged Sudan city closed,* 10 June 2024. Darfur24, *El Fasher Southern Hospital out of service,* 10 June 2024. The Independent, *Sudan's notorious paramilitary group loots a Darfur hospital, aid group says,* 10 June 2024.
[797] Al Jazeera, *Dozens killed in drone attack on hospital in Sudan's Darfur,* 25 January 2025. The Guardian, *Scores killed in hospital attack in Sudan's besieged El Fasher, says WHO,* 26 January 2025. SWM, *UN condemns attack on Saudi hospital in Sudan,* 28 January 2025.
[798] Al Jazeera, *Six killed as RSF attack devastates Sudanese hospital in North Kordofan,* 30 May 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Sudan's RSF shells El Obeid, hospital hit, as ministry reports 28 dead in Kordofan,* 31 May 2025.
[799] Darfur24, *Deaths, injuries as West Kordofan hospital bombed,* 22 June 2025. BBC, *Children killed in 'appalling' Sudan hospital attack – WHO head,* 24 June 2025. NOS, *Meer dan veertig doden bij aanval op ziekenhuis in Sudan,* 24 June 2025. The Guardian, *WHO says attack on Sudanese hospital killed more than 40 civilians,* 24 June 2025. De Volkskrant, *Ruim veertig doden, onder wie zes kinderen en vijf artsen, bij aanval op ziekenhuis in Soedan,* 25 June 2025.
[800] Al Jazeera, *RSF attack on hospital in Sudan's el-Fasher kills 12, medics say*, 8 October 2025. Sudans Post, *Sudan doctors condemn "war crime" after hospital attack in El Fasher,* 8 October 2025.
[801] BBC, *Thirteen killed as hospital shelled in besieged Sudan city, BBC told*, 9 October 2025.

In mid-October 2025, *Darfur24* reported that the healthcare sector in Al Nahud had been almost completely destroyed. This city in West Kordofan had been captured by the RSF in early May 2025 (see 2.5.2). After taking the city, they destroyed and looted hospitals, clinics and pharmacies in Al Nahud.[802]

In November 2025, the only hospital in Tina, a town adjacent to the border with Chad, was forced to close its doors. The closure was prompted by an attack by an armed group affiliated with the Taasis alliance. The staff of the hospital fled across the border to Chad.[803]

7.7 Refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan

7.7.1 General asylum context

The Asylum (Organization) Act of 2014 regulates asylum flows in Sudan.[804] The Commission of Refugees (COR) is part of the Sudanese Ministry of the Interior and is responsible for registering asylum seekers and determining their status and issuing documents to asylum seekers and recognised refugees. This government commission largely performs the above tasks in partnership with UNHCR.[805] In this section, the term 'refugee' refers to a person with a nationality other than Sudanese who is recognised in Sudan as a refugee, for example an Eritrean.

Sudan has long been home to a sizeable refugee community, with refugees from South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia in particular (see also 7.7.2).[806] For South Sudanese asylum seekers, a *prima facie* policy was in operation.[807] Eritrean asylum applications were handled on an individual basis. Ethiopians who had fled the armed conflict in Tigray and entered Sudan after November 2020 were also subject to a *prima facie* policy.[808] Ethiopians from the rest of Ethiopia were required to make a plausible case for international protection on individual grounds.[809]

The COR was primarily operational in the areas controlled by the SAF. The COR retained a limited presence in a few places in Darfur and Kordofan that were under the control of the RSF. It was unclear to what extent COR officials in RSF territory provided services to refugees and what their relationship was with the COR head office in Port Sudan.[810]

In July 2025, the independent news platform *Sudan Tribune* reported that the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had suspended refugee registration by the COR. According to the report, the parent ministry had launched an investigation into the functioning of the COR in response to accusations of corruption and

[802] Darfur24, *Health sector in Nahud collapses after systematic RSF destruction,* 14 October 2025.
[803] Darfur24, *Al-Tina hospital in Darfur remains closed after armed raid,* 17 November 2025.
[804] The text of the act may be accessed via *Refworld*, a UNHCR knowledge bank about refugees and statelessness.
[805] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 88. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[806] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 87.
[807] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 88 and 89. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[808] *Prima facie* is Latin and literally means 'at first sight'. In the context of asylum law and regulations, *prima facie* means that individuals are deemed to be refugees simply because they belong to a certain group of people and because of the circumstances in their country of origin. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 84.
[809] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 88 and 89. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[810] Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.

mismanagement.[811] A source indicated that the registration of refugees had only been suspended in the state of Khartoum, but that it continued elsewhere in the country.[812]

7.7.2 Asylum practice

In the preceding reporting period, most asylum seekers and refugees were living in the eastern states of White Nile, Kassala and Gedaref. These states were under the control of the SAF.[813]

During the current reporting period, the Sudanese authorities decided that all foreigners, including registered refugees, must leave the state of Khartoum. The authorities cited security considerations to explain this measure, because some South Sudanese and Ethiopians had allegedly fought on the side of the RSF during the Battle for Khartoum (see also 1.6.6, 2.3.1 and 2.5.4). The Eritreans in Khartoum were required to relocate to refugee camps in Kassala, the Ethiopians to camps in Gedaref and the South Sudanese to camps in White Nile.[814] In late May 2025, the first organised convoy of Ethiopian refugees left Khartoum.[815]

The following table provides an overview of the number of registered refugees and asylum seekers per state as of 30 June 2025. On the above date, Sudan had a total of 881,575 registered refugees and asylum seekers, among whom 654,987 South Sudanese (74.30%), 137,900 Eritreans (15.64%) and 69,274 Ethiopians (7.86%).[816] 69% of the refugee community lived in refugee camps and 31% outside. The data below were obtained from the COR and UNHCR.[817]

Number of registered refugees and asylum seekers per state (30 June 2025)

State	Number of refugees and asylum seekers
White Nile	440,081
Kassala	111,212
Gedaref	61,239
East Darfur	41,152
Khartoum	40,327
West Kordofan	34,186
South Kordofan	29,868
Red Sea	20,026
North Darfur	19,945
Blue Nile	18,241
South Darfur	17,313
North Kordofan	13,539
Northern State	11,299
River Nile	11,000
El Gezira	6,000
Central Darfur	3,847

[811] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan suspends refugee registration, probes commission for corruption,* 18 July 2025.
[812] Confidential source, 23 July 2025.
[813] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 88.
[814] Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Khartoum begins relocating refugees, foreigners, citing security concerns,* 29 May 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[815] Sudan Tribune, *Khartoum begins relocating refugees, foreigners, citing security concerns,* 29 May 2025.
[816] Syrians, Central Africans, Yemenis, Chadians and other nationalities made up a 'residual category'.
[817] UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Sudan*, last updated on 30 June 2025, accessed on 20 July 2025.

Sennar	2,000
West Darfur	300
Total	**881,575**

Source: UNHCR and COR.

Sudan operated a so-called 'encampment policy'. In principle, recognised refugees living in refugee camps had access to healthcare, food and education. However, due to the war situation, the provision of services to refugees was under pressure.[818] To a limited extent, refugees received food aid, legal assistance and financial assistance from providers including multilateral organisations such as the IOM and the World Food Programme (WFP).[819]

One source pointed out that the refugee camps were mostly in isolated locations. Refugees could have minor health problems treated in a health centre in the camp, but for serious issues they had to travel to a hospital in a town or city, which was not always possible. There were schools in the camps, but due to the withdrawal of US funding, the teachers were no longer receiving their salaries and their travel costs to the camps were no longer being reimbursed. As a result of the conflict-related violence, some teachers had themselves been displaced. Consequently, there was a lack of teachers in the refugee camps, according to the source.[820]

For refugees in Sudan, freedom of movement was limited. Refugees wishing to travel outside the area of registration were required to first obtain a travel permit from the COR.[821] The above requirement was less strictly enforced for refugees who performed seasonal work in the agriculture sector.[822]

7.7.3 Eritreans in Sudan

As stated in subsection 7.7.2, in late June 2025, Sudan had 137,900 registered Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers. It was not known how many Eritreans had adopted Sudanese nationality and how many Eritreans led an undocumented existence in Sudan.[823]

According to Section 23 of the Asylum (Organization) Act of 2014, recognised refugees are eligible for naturalisation.[824] The Nationality Act of 1994, which was amended in 2011 and 2018, stipulates that a person is eligible for Sudanese nationality if that person has lived in Sudan on a lawful basis for ten consecutive years.[825]

One source stated that, although in principle a person who has been registered as a refugee for ten consecutive years fulfils the above condition, in practice, matters were more problematic. Refugees submitting a request for naturalisation faced bureaucratic obstacles and long waiting times. The same source had knowledge of several Eritrean, Ethiopian and Somali refugees who had applied for naturalisation

[818] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 89. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[819] Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[820] Confidential source, 16 May 2025.
[821] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 89. Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), *Where to next?, Eritrean displacement amidst shrinking spaces of refuge,* April 2025, p. 22. Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[822] Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[823] Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[824] Sudanese Ministry of the Interior, Asylum (Organization) Act, published in 2014, p. 19.
[825] The text of the act may be accessed via Refworld.

before the outbreak of the war in April 2023. Even though they fulfilled the conditions, their applications were not granted, according to the source.[826]

Another source remarked that not every refugee saw the point in requesting Sudanese nationality. For instance, the source knew an Eritrean who was born and bred in Sudan. This person simply did not consider it worth the trouble to apply for Sudanese nationality, because in their view the benefits of Sudanese nationality were not worth the effort associated with such an application.[827]

The same source explained that it depended on a person's objective whether or not they would seek registration with the COR and UNHCR.[828] A survey by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC)[829] in 2024 revealed that fifty percent of newly arrived Eritreans regarded Sudan as a transit country.[830] This group generally spent a short time in Sudan before continuing their journeys to neighbouring countries such as Chad, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Eritreans in transit generally did not make any effort to obtain official documents in Sudan. Eritreans seeking to build a new life in a refugee camp or in a town or city in Sudan generally did make the effort to register, according to the source.[831]

The sources gave somewhat contradictory explanations of the potential risks run by unregistered Eritreans in Sudan. One source stated that unregistered Eritreans ran the risk of exploitation and deportation to Eritrea.[832] Another source observed that Eritreans did not so much run the risk of deportation but more of being arrested and fined. According to the source, police officers had turned the practice into a 'revenue model'. For this reason, Eritreans who lived their whole lives in Sudan would benefit from formalising their residence in Sudan. Otherwise they constantly ran the risk of being arrested and fined, according to the source.[833]

[826] Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[827] Confidential source, 16 May 2025.
[828] Confidential source, 16 May 2025.
[829] The MMC is a research network that focuses on migration flows. The centre is part of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). See https://mixedmigration.org for more information on the MMC. See https://drc.ngo/where-we-work/east-africa-great-lakes/sudan/ for more information on the work of the DRC in Sudan.
[830] MMC, *Where to next?,* April 2025, p. 23.
[831] Confidential source, 16 May 2025.
[832] Confidential source, 15 July 2025.
[833] Confidential source, 16 May 2025.

8 Women

8.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the situation of women in Sudan. Section 8.2 deals with the position of women and girls in Sudanese society and describes how the war has influenced that position. Section 8.3 explains how sexual and gender-related violence (hereinafter: sexual violence) has been used as a weapon of war, and uses the available quantitative data to provide an impression of the scale of conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls in particular. Section 8.4 describes the extent to which women have enjoyed access to legal protection and shelter. Section 8.5 considers the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM).

8.2 Social context

There was gender inequality in Sudan, for example in public administration and the labour market.[834] In 2025, Sudan ranked 147th out of the 148 countries listed in the World Economic Forum's (WEF)[835] gender equality rankings. Of the male labour force, 61.87% participated in working life in 2025; for the female labour force, the figure was 14.39%. Of the professional group comprising legislators, high-ranking officials and managers, 75.76% were men and 24.24% were women. The country's council of ministers consisted of 92.31% men and 7.69% women.[836] Few if any Sudanese women attended peace talks (see section 1.4).[837]

On 27 July 2025, Kamil Idris, the new prime minister who was charged with forming a new government (see 1.3.3), appointed Lemia Abdel Ghaffar Khalafallah as Minister of Cabinet Affairs. It was the first time that a woman had occupied this ministerial post. He also appointed Sulaima Ishaq Elkhalifa[838] Sharif as State Secretary of Human Resources and Social Welfare. She was previously the commissioner of the *Combating Violence Against Women and Children Commission,*[839] a state body that fell under the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and focused on combating violence against women and children.[840] On 1 September 2025, Burhan appointed Intisar Ahmed Abdel-Aal as public prosecutor. She was the first woman to occupy this position.[841]

Sudan has traditionally been a patriarchal society, and the associated gender inequality to the detriment of women and girls manifests itself in various ways, for example in the form of child marriages, arranged marriages, FGM and gender-related violence.[842] Sections 8.3 and 8.5 discuss how patterns of gender-related violence and FGM have changed under the impact of the war.

[834] Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker (STPT), *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, pp. 5 and 15.
[835] See https://www.weforum.org for more information on the WEF.
[836] WEF, *Global gender gap report 2025, Insight report,* June 2025, p. 339.
[837] Radio Dabanga, *A negotiating table without women, When the most-effected voices are ignored,* 16 November 2025.
[838] Also spelt 'Al-Khalifa'.
[839] During the preceding reporting period, this commission was still a 'unit'.
[840] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan PM appoints new ministers, names first woman to key cabinet post,* 28 July 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025.
[841] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan appoints first woman as public prosecutor,* 1 September 2025.
[842] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 11. STPT, *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, p. 11.

On the one hand, the war hit women and girls hard. Not only were they victims of conflict-related sexual violence on a large scale (see section 8.3), they were also adversely affected by the war situation in other ways. Due to the collapse of the health sector (see section 7.6), some women who were pregnant or about to give birth had no access to a doctor, midwife or medical facilities.[843] This resulted in premature births, miscarriages and maternal mortality. These problems were particularly evident in El Fasher (North Darfur) and in South and West Kordofan.[844]

The war was accompanied by an economic crisis, as a result of which some parents and guardians felt forced to marry off their daughters at a young age. This meant that they no longer had to pay for their subsistence and they received a dowry in return.[845] Section 8.3 discusses forced marriages of girls to RSF fighters.

On the other hand, the war created greater social latitude and decision-making authority for women. In a context of large-scale displacement (see section 7.2), it became more socially accepted for women to travel without a male escort. It also became more common for women to take on the role of breadwinner.[846] One source observed that women generally played a leading role in community kitchens and relief committees (see section 5.5) and in IDP camps. This increased the visibility of women within society, according to the source.[847]

8.3 Gender-related violence and conflict-related sexual violence

There is a long history of conflict-related sexual violence in Sudan. In the early 21st century, the Janjaweed, the predecessor of the RSF, used sexual violence as a weapon of war against African women and girls in Darfur.[848] During the preceding reporting period, conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls especially increased sharply. The RSF in particular used sexual violence as a weapon of war.[849]

During the current reporting period, conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls continued. The UN Human Rights Council described the conflict-related sexual violence by the RSF as 'large-scale', 'widespread' and 'systematic'. The sexual violence served as a weapon of war and was designed to instil fear in the population and undermine the social cohesion of communities. For instance, stories came to light of men leaving or disowning their wives after they had been raped.[850] In this regard, women's bodies were described as 'part of the battlefield'.[851]

[843] STPT, *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, p. 7.
[844] Darfur24, *Pregnant women in El Fasher facing death as hospitals run out of service,* 14 May 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan's women 'bear the brunt of war as maternal deaths surge',* 18 May 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan Media Forum: 'Displaced mothers face rising miscarriages as conflict collapses healthcare',* 17 July 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudan war is stealing the right of women and mothers to life,* 24 August 2025.
[845] STPT, *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, p. 9.
[846] STPT, *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, p. 8.
[847] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[848] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 93. SIHA, *Gezira State and the forgotten atrocities,* June 2024, p. 10. STPT, *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, p. 11. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, p. 24. Radio Dabanga, *'The body as a battlefield', Sexual violence in Sudan is a 'deliberate genocidal tactic',* 30 April 2025. SIHA, *A lonely road,* 28 August 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Hoe het seksuele geweld in Soedan stilletjes doorgaat,* published on 4 September 2025, updated on 5 September 2025.
[849] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 93.
[850] SIHA, *Gezira State and the forgotten atrocities,* June 2024, pp. 3, 5 and 6. STPT, *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, p. 10. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, pp. 1, 3 and 70. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025. SIHA, *A lonely road,* 28 August 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Hoe het seksuele geweld in Soedan stilletjes doorgaat,* published on 4 September 2025, updated on 5 September 2025. UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, pp. 8-10.
[851] Radio Dabanga, *'The body as a battlefield',* 30 April 2025.

One source commented that the RSF deliberately forced their way into houses and subjected the female inhabitants in particular to rapes/gang rapes. In this sense, according to the source, there was clearly a pattern. The same source related that individual SAF soldiers and armed civilians also committed sexual violence.[852]

The fact that the RSF were responsible for the majority of cases of sexual violence is also apparent from the available figures. Between April 2023 and February 2024, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented 262 victims of sexual violence in the whole of Khartoum, i.e. the city centre, Bahri ('North Khartoum') and Omdurman. Most of the victims were raped or sexually assaulted by the RSF, nine by the SAF and a small number by civilians.[853]

HRW documented the rapes of 79 women and girls in South Kordofan between 31 December 2023 and October 2024. All the rapes were committed by RSF fighters or militia members affiliated to the RSF. The victims belonged to the Nuba, a collection of black population groups. The RSF explicitly referred to their victims' ethnic identity and made Afrophobic remarks such as: 'These Nuba are our slaves; we can do anything we want'.[854]

The UN documented 368 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence between 15 April 2023 and 31 May 2025, involving at least 521 victims. In over seventy percent of the cases, the perpetrators belonged to the RSF.[855] The UN's statement did not specify in which areas these incidents had taken place.

One source had documented 120 cases of sexual violence between April 2023 and early July 2025. Approximately eighty percent of the cases were committed by the RSF and approximately twenty percent by the SAF. The incidents had taken place in different regions, states and cities, i.e. Khartoum, El Gezira, Darfur and Singa (Sennar).[856] Another source had documented 1,385 cases of sexual violence between April 2023 and early August 2025. Approximately 91% or 92% of the cases were committed by the RSF, the rest by the SAF and armed civilians. Most of the incidents had taken place in RSF territory, according to the source.[857]

Between January 2024 and March 2025, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) provided assistance to 659 victims of sexual violence in South Darfur. In 56% of the cases, the perpetrator was a soldier, police officer or militia fighter. In the other 44%, the perpetrator was a civilian.[858]

The above data from public and confidential sources did not convey the full scale of the sexual violence in Sudan. Many victims did not report sexual violence out of shame and fear of reprisals.[859] The above data provide some indication of the severity and scale of the problem. At the time of writing, there was no complete overview of how many cases of sexual violence had taken place in each state and which parties and persons were responsible.

[852] Confidential source, 31 July 2025.
[853] HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, pp. 1, 2, 17, 19 and 36.
[854] HRW, *Sudan, Fighters rape women and girls, hold sex slaves,* 15 December 2024.
[855] OHCHR, *Statement by Radhouane Nouicer, the designated expert on Sudan of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict*, 19 June 2025.
[856] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[857] Confidential source, 31 July and 3 August 2025.
[858] MSF, *Sexual violence in Sudan, "They beat us and they raped us right there on the road in public",* 28 May 2025.
[859] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 94. STPT, *A feminist perspective on the armed conflict in Sudan,* June 2024, p. 11. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, p. 76. OHCHR, *Statement by Radhouane Nouicer, the designated expert on Sudan of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict*, 19 June 2025.

There were also other dynamics and patterns to be identified with regard to sexual conflict-related violence. The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) conducted a qualitative study of the sexual violence by the RSF in El Gezira and the western part of Sennar. One of SIHA's findings was that RSF regarded women and girls as *Ghanima*, or 'war booty', to which they felt entitled. Women who were visible in public life, such as female street vendors and healthcare workers, were particularly targeted.[860]

As a result of the conflict, the number of child marriages increased. Some families in Khartoum and El Gezira pre-emptively married off girls to RSF fighters. In this way, rape was 'prevented' and the family honour remained intact. In the context of an economic crisis, a forced marriage of this kind was also a way of obtaining additional income, in view of the fact that the RSF fighter would pay a dowry. It also meant the family had one less mouth to feed after the marriage.[861] It was unclear on what scale this practice took place.

Depending on the geographical context, the sexual violence could take on a racial or regional dimension, as became clear above from a study by HRW on sexual violence by the RSF against Nuba women and girls in South Kordofan. In Darfur, too, RSF fighters of Arab origin explicitly referred to the black skin colour or ethnic identity of their African victims. The perpetrators made comments such as: 'We are bestowing an honour on you, because you will now have the chance of bearing an Arab baby'.[862] In other cases, rapists mutilated black women so that they could no longer have children, shouting: 'No more African children will be born'.[863] The UN Human Rights Council determined that sexual violence with an ethnic dimension was taking place against Zaghawa and Fur women in North Darfur, for example.[864]

Historically, there was a deep divide between Arabs from the Nile Valley in the north of the country and Arabs from Darfur. Furthermore, women in Khartoum were known for being empowered and emancipated.[865] When RSF fighters of Darfuri origin subjected women and girls in Khartoum to sexual violence, they referenced those differences, making comments such as: 'Why are you resisting [us] when you're so liberal [sexually]?'[866]

In the preceding reporting period, women and girls ran an increased risk of sexual violence if they were fleeing, collecting water, working the land and/or gathering firewood.[867] This dynamic persisted during the current reporting period.[868] As stated above, between January 2024 and March 2025, MSF treated 659 victims of sexual violence in South Darfur. Of those, 34% had been subjected to sexual violence when on their way to or working in the fields.[869]

[860] SIHA, *Gezira State and the forgotten atrocities,* June 2024, pp. 4-6..
[861] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 95. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, pp. 4, 43 and 44. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[862] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 25. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 31 July and 3 August 2025.
[863] Nederlands Dagblad, *De vorige genocide in Darfur kwam te paard, Nu vliegen er drones,* 15 November 2025.
[864] UN Human Rights Council, *Sudan, A war of atrocities,* 5 September 2025, p. 9.
[865] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 9, 10 and 92.
[866] Confidential source, 31 July 2025.
[867] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 93.
[868] Darfur24, *Violence against displaced women on the rise in South Darfur,* 8 November 2025.
[869] MSF, *Sexual violence in Sudan,* 28 May 2025.

Men and boys were less likely to be victims of conflict-related sexual violence. As stated above, the HRW documented 262 victims of sexual violence between April 2023 and February 2024. Those victims included seven men and boys.[870] As stated above, between January 2024 and March 2025, MSF treated 659 victims of sexual violence in South Darfur. Of those, six percent were men or boys.[871]

See section 10.3 for more information on conflict-related sexual violence against minors.

8.4 Legal protection and shelter for women

Even before the outbreak of the war in April 2023, the criminal justice system in Sudan was inadequate and a culture of impunity prevailed for perpetrators of sexual violence. As a result of the conflict, it became even harder for victims of sexual violence to seek redress from the authorities, because the rule of law and the police no longer operated (see also section 5.2).[872]

In view of the stigma attached to sexual violence and the lack of trust in the rule of law, many victims of sexual violence were reluctant to turn to the Sudanese authorities. They were afflicted by shame and feared reprisals by the perpetrators.[873]

One source pointed out that in SAF territory it was possible to report rapes by RSF fighters. If an SAF soldier had committed a rape, a victim in SAF territory would do well to report only that the perpetrator was wearing military fatigues, according to the same source.[874]

Another source observed that in 2025, the number of reports of sexual violence had increased. This trend occurred in the eastern states that were under the control of the SAF. It mainly concerned sexual violence against civilians in host communities and IDP camps, according to the source.[875]

The sources gave varying accounts regarding shelter for female victims of gender-related violence. One source asserted that there were several shelters for women in the eastern state of Gedaref. Those shelters offered psychosocial support for women and acquainted them with income-generating activities.[876] Another source had knowledge of a shelter that received financial support from a well-known family in Sudan.[877] Two sources stated that they had no knowledge of shelters for women in Sudan.[878]

[870] HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, pp. 45 and 46.
[871] MSF, *Sexual violence in Sudan,* 28 May 2025.
[872] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 95. HRW, *"Khartoum is not safe for women!",* July 2024, pp. 7 and 19.
[873] Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[874] Confidential source, 3 July 2025.
[875] Confidential source, 31 July and 3 August 2025.
[876] Confidential source, 16 May 2025.
[877] Confidential source, 31 July 2025.
[878] Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.

8.5 Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM was common in Sudan.[879] As a result of the conflict and large-scale displacement, no quantitative data were available about the prevalence of FGM in Sudan.[880] A pre-war study from 2010 revealed that 88% of women and girls in the 15-49 age category had undergone a form of FGM.[881] There are different forms of FGM, about which more details are provided in the preceding COI Report.[882]

During the reporting period, the use of FGM appeared to increase, although sources did not quantify the supposed increase.[883] The perceived rise was related to the conflict and the accompanying displacement. Some families had girls circumcised because they believed it would protect them against being raped. This was particularly the case among families in areas invaded by the RSF. Many displaced persons also fled from the cities to the villages. In the latter, FGM was more firmly rooted and incomers from urban areas experienced social pressure to have their daughters circumcised.[884] For instance, one source had knowledge of a family that had fled from Khartoum to a rural area. The family had lost everything in material terms and was given shelter by the grandmother in her village. She demanded that her granddaughter be circumcised. The family acceded to this demand for fear that the grandmother would otherwise withdraw her help, according to the source.[885]

In Sudan, involvement in FGM is punishable by a maximum prison term of three years.[886] As far as could be ascertained, few if any persons were prosecuted and convicted for involvement in FGM during the reporting period.[887]

[879] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 96.
[880] Confidential source, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025.
[881] United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), *Female Genital Mutilation Dashboard (FGM) – Sudan,* undated, accessed on 3 August 2025.
[882] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 97.
[883] Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025. Moatinoon, *Sudan's war revives harmful traditions, Female Genital Mutilation returns amid lawlessness and crisis,* 22 October 2025.
[884] Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[885] Confidential source, 31 July 2025.
[886] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 97. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Confidential source, 31 July 2025. Confidential source, 5 August 2025.
[887] Confidential source, 31 July 2025. Confidential source, 5 August 2025.

9 LGBTIQ+

9.1 Introduction

Due to the confused war situation, no public information was available on the situation of the LGBTIQ+ rights movement and community in Sudan. For this reason, the information on the reporting period is primarily derived from a confidential source. For more information, please refer to the COI Report from May 2024.[888]

Section 9.2 deals with the legal context and the extent to which LGBTIQ+ people were subjected to criminal prosecution and had access to legal protection. Section 9.3 discusses the situation of LGBTIQ+ people in society and describes how this community was impacted by the war.

9.2 Legal context, criminal prosecution and legal protection

'Sodomy' (in Arabic, *liwat*) is punishable under Section 148 of the Penal Code of Sudan. In legal terms, 'sodomy'[889] in the Penal Code refers to anal sex. This can apply to both anal sex between two men and anal sex between a man and a woman.[890] 'Sodomy' is punishable by a prison term of up to five years for a first conviction, up to seven years for a second conviction and life for a third conviction.[891]

A source commented that this legal provision was not enforced in practice. If police officers suspected a person of having an LGBTIQ+ orientation, this was a reason to harass the person and put them under pressure. If the person did not pay a sum of money, the police would threaten to detain them. As such, LGBTIQ+ persons were not subject to criminal prosecution but to extortion, according to the source.[892]

The same source observed that LGBTIQ+ persons did not have access to legal protection. The source cited the example of a lesbian whose possessions were stolen by a burglar. When she reported the break-in to the police, the officer on duty was interested only in her physical appearance. The officer commented that she had a short hairstyle and looked 'unfeminine'[893]. When the lesbian noticed that the officer suspected her of having an LGBTIQ+ orientation, she decided to drop the matter for fear of negative consequences, according to the source.[894]

[888] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 99 and 100.
[889] This term has been placed between quotation marks in order to make clear that while it is customary in Sudanese criminal law, it is not an accepted term for the Dutch government.
[890] Anal sex between two men is described as 'gross sodomy' and anal sex between a man and a woman as 'light sodomy'.
[891] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 99. Confidential source, 25 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[892] Confidential source, 25 July 2025.
[893] This term has been placed between quotation marks because it was the word used by the police officer in question.
[894] Confidential source, 25 July 2025.

9.3 Situation of LGBTIQ+ people in society

The social climate for LGBTIQ+ people in Sudan was poor. During the revolution (2018-2019) and the subsequent transitional period (2019-2021), LGBTIQ+ people in Khartoum had some latitude to express their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). LGBTIQ+ activists also saw an opportunity to call for the emancipation of their community. That latitude was lost after Burhan seized power in October 2021 (see section 1.2). In view of the risk of discrimination, stigmatisation and social exclusion, many LGBTIQ+ people kept their sexual orientation and gender identity concealed.[895]

A source clarified that the war was having a negative impact on the Sudanese LGBTIQ+ community in various ways. Firstly, Sudanese LGBTIQ+ activists and persons have been scattered throughout the country and neighbouring countries. Secondly, partnerships between the Sudanese LGBTIQ+ rights movement and international actors have been lost due to the war. Consequently, it was harder for LGBTIQ+ activists to find each other and they did not have the financial resources to continue their activism. As a result, incidents of violence and intolerance towards LGBTIQ+ people were no longer being documented. Additionally, a conspiracy theory was allegedly circulating within Sudanese society according to which the current war was a punishment by God for the presence of LGBTIQ+ people in Sudan.[896]

As indicated above, there were no quantitative data on violent incidents against LGBTIQ+ persons in Sudan during the reporting period. A source reported that LGBTIQ+ persons could experience problems at checkpoints operated by the warring parties. If the security personnel at a checkpoint examined a mobile phone and the content revealed that the owner had a LGBTIQ+ identity, that person could be subjected to extortion (see section 5.8 for information about checkpoints in general). The source also indicated that some LGBTIQ+ persons had lost their lives during the conflict, but it remained unclear whether their deaths were attributable to LGBTIQ+ phobia or to the general war situation. The same source observed that LGBTIQ+ persons were subject to extortion, arrest, detention and violence. In addition, LGBTIQ+ activists ran the risk of lifelong prison terms because the Sudanese authorities regarded their activism as endangering state security.[897]

In the context of displacement, LGBTIQ+ persons could find themselves once again exposed to LGBTIQ+ phobic family dynamics. A source cited the example of a homosexual man who led an independent existence in Khartoum before the war. Following the outbreak of the war, he fled to Cairo. After he had got used to life in the Egyptian capital, his family announced that they would also be fleeing to Cairo. Since his family members were poor, he had a moral obligation to house them in his apartment. As a result, he was once again exposed to the LGBTIQ+ phobic sentiments of his family members.[898] See section 11.2 for more information on the situation of Sudanese in Egypt.

[895] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 99. Confidential source, 25 July 2025.
[896] Confidential source, 25 July 2025.
[897] Confidential source, 25 July 2025. Confidential source, 5 August 2025.
[898] Confidential source, 25 July 2025.

LGBTIQ+ persons who had fled to neighbouring countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan experienced problems in their host countries. Strong LGBTIQ+ phobic sentiments also prevailed in those countries. Sudanese LGBTIQ+ people were generally not well informed about the local laws and rules pertaining to LGBTIQ+. For instance, one source had knowledge of three Sudanese LGBTIQ+ persons, two homosexual men and one trans woman, who had been arrested in a neighbouring country for using certain dating apps. They were not aware that the authorities in the country in question monitored the use of certain apps, according to the source. The three were accused of 'prostitution'. At the time of writing, it was not known how the arrested persons were faring.[899]

Sudanese legislation and regulations did not recognise the existence of trans persons. For this reason, transgenders could not legally change their sex in Sudan.[900] A source pointed out that opportunities did exist for financially and/or socially privileged trans persons to undergo a gender reassignment procedure. For instance, this source knew the story of a trans man from a rich and well-known family. He had contacts with a general in the Sudanese government army and had access to a doctor and hormone therapy. According to the source, this person was able to undergo a transition without any problem. However, the same source knew a trans woman in Port Sudan who belonged to a lower economic class. She did not have access to hormones, which meant that she was unable to continue her transition.[901]

[899] Confidential source, 25 July 2025. Confidential source, 5 August 2025.
[900] Confidential source, 25 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[901] Confidential source, 25 July 2025.

10 Unaccompanied minors

10.1 Introduction

Children were particularly affected by the conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. Among other things, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Force (RSF) and their affiliated militias subjected minors to forced displacement, sexual violence (see section 10.3) and forced recruitment (see section 6.4). The warring parties also destroyed schools and hospitals.[902] In October 2025, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (RWCHR) reported that ten million children had been exposed to violence. Four million children were malnourished, seventeen million children were unable to attend school and sixteen million children were in urgent need of humanitarian aid.[903]

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) observed that the level of school attendance varied by population group and state. School attendance among displaced children was 23%, whereas among children in host communities the figure was 43%. In Northern State, El Gezira and River Nile, 87%, 87% and 78% of children, respectively, attended school. In North, South and Central Darfur, the respective percentages were three, seven and seven.[904]

This chapter discusses the situation of minors (including unaccompanied minors) in Sudan in more detail. Section 10.2 describes how legal authority over minors is regulated in Sudanese law. Section 10.3 deals with sexual conflict-related violence against minors and the extent to which minors are able to obtain protection against such violence from the Sudanese government. Section 10.4 considers shelter for minors (including unaccompanied minors). Given that little public information was available on minors (including unaccompanied minors) in Sudan, most of the information in this chapter is from confidential sources.

10.2 Authority over minors

Authority over minors was governed by a law known as the Personal Law or Muslims Family Law. This law dated from 1991 and was based on Islamic family law. The aforementioned law differentiated between guardianship and custody.[905]

The mother has custody of the child, known in Arabic as *hadana,* during the first years of life. For boys, this period lasts until the seventh year of life; for girls until the ninth. If the mother dies during this period, custody is transferred to the maternal grandmother, then to the paternal grandmother and, finally, to another female relative (e.g. an aunt).[906]

[902] RWCHR, *A war on children,* October 2025, pp. 10 and 11. Moatinoon, *Sudan's children bear the worst the world has to offer,* 24 October 2025.
[903] RWCHR, *A war on children,* October 2025, pp. 8 and 12.
[904] IOM, *Sudan Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA),* 23 October 2025, p. 8.
[905] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 102. Confidential source, 1 August 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[906] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 102. Confidential source, 1 August 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.

The father has legal guardianship, known in Arabic as *wilaya*.[907] If the father dies, guardianship is transferred first to the paternal grandfather and then to another male relative.[908] If no suitable male family member is available, a judge can act as *wali* ('guardian').[909]

A different family law existed for non-Muslims.[910] One source added that in most cases, the Personal Law of 1991 applied and this law was in force throughout the country. However, due to the general war situation, state institutions had been weakened (see also section 5.2), so that the Personal Law was not adequately applied everywhere, according to the source.[911] The source did not clarify in which parts of the country the Personal Law was applied in an adequate manner and in which parts it was not.

10.3 Conflict-related sexual violence against minors

In early March 2025, UNICEF revealed that conflict-related sexual violence was being perpetrated against minors in Sudan. The UN children's rights organisation documented 221 rapes of minors between early 2024 and early March 2025. Sixteen victims were below the age of five. 66% of the victims were girls and 33% were boys. The rapes took place throughout Sudan. UNICEF made it clear that the actual number of rapes of minors was higher. Victims and their family members were usually silent about such rapes due to shame and fear of reprisals.[912] The UNICEF communiqué did not specify which parties and persons were responsible for the rapes of children.

One source observed that few if any medical and psychological treatments were available for minors who had suffered sexual violence. The source attributed this to the general war situation (see section 7.6 for information on the collapse of the health sector). Such treatments were inadequate, not accessible or did not exist, according to the source.[913]

There were units within the Sudanese police force that were responsible for addressing violations of children's rights, the so-called Family and Child Protection Units (FCPU). As a result of the war, these police units were not functioning properly. For instance, one source had knowledge of girls who had fallen pregnant as a result of rapes in RSF territory. When they appealed to the authorities in SAF territory, they were accused of collaboration with the RSF and detained and prosecuted, according to the source.[914]

Family and tribal formations resorted to traditional practices in order to 'protect'[915] their girls against sexual violence, such as child marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM).[916] More information on this is provided in sections 8.3 and 8.5

[907] A person reaches legal majority in Sudan at the age of eighteen. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 101.
[908] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 102. Confidential source, 1 August 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[909] Confidential source, 1 August 2025.
[910] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 102. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[911] Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[912] UNICEF, *Children as young as one reported among survivors of rape during Sudan's violent conflict,* 4 March 2025.
[913] Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[914] Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[915] This word has been placed between quotation marks because the practices employed provided no actual protection against sexual violence.
[916] Confidential source, 4 August 2025. Moatinoon, *Sudan's war revives harmful traditions,* 22 October 2025.

10.4 Shelter for unaccompanied minors

The Sudanese Ministry of Social Development was responsible for providing shelter for unaccompanied minors and managing state orphanages. It was supported in these tasks by UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).[917] Each NGO was required to register with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), a government commission responsible for overseeing the country's humanitarian sector (see also 7.5).[918] In order to be able to operate in the field of child welfare, NGOs were also required to conclude an agreement with the Ministry of Social Development.[919]

As a result of the general war situation, the service provision of the Ministry of Social Development came under severe pressure. Before the outbreak of war in April 2023, the state orphanages provided education, healthcare, food, clothing and psychosocial support to orphans. The war situation resulted in a lack of resources to enable the ministry in question to continue to provide these services. In addition, social workers employed by the Ministry of Social Development were no longer being paid their salaries.[920]

In the preceding reporting period, the orphans of Maygoma, a large orphanage in Khartoum, were displaced twice.[921] In June 2023, they fled from Khartoum to Wad Madani and in December 2023 from Wad Madani to Kassala. In the latter city, they were provided with makeshift accommodation in school buildings.[922] At the time of writing, most of the children from Maygoma had been placed in foster homes. As far as could be ascertained, the only remaining state orphanage was in Atbara, a city in River Nile state.[923] No more specific information was available about this orphanage.

Hardly any private initiatives existed to care for unaccompanied minors. Most unaccompanied minors had been given makeshift accommodation in school buildings or were now living with extended family or foster or adoption families.[924] The Islamic version of adoption was known as *Kafala*.[925]

[917] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 102. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[918] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, October 2019, p. 52. Confidential source, 4 August 2025. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[919] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 102. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[920] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 102. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[921] Known in the jargon as 'secondary displacement'.
[922] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 102 and 103.
[923] Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[924] Confidential source, 4 August 2025.
[925] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 103. Confidential source, 4 August 2025.

11 Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries

11.1 Introduction

Starting from the outbreak of the war in April 2023, hundreds of thousands of people fled from Sudan to neighbouring countries, in particular the Central African Republic (CAR), Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Chad, Uganda and South Sudan. This refugee flow included both Sudanese refugees and 'returnees', i.e. individuals returning to their countries of origin due to the war in Sudan.[926]

It was not possible to provide an in-depth view of the situation and reception of Sudanese refugees in every neighbouring country. For this reason, this chapter discusses the situation of Sudanese refugees in Egypt (section 11.2), Kenya (section 11.3), Chad (section 11.4) and Uganda (section 11.5).

Due to funding shortfalls at the World Food Programme (WFP), food aid to Sudanese refugees in the neighbouring countries was limited, leading to malnutrition and starvation.[927] This circumstance is elaborated for each country below.

11.2 Egypt

11.2.1 General asylum context

In December 2024, the Egyptian parliament adopted a new asylum act, which was ratified by president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. One of the aims of this act was to establish a national legal framework for asylum and refugee matters. The Egyptian authorities wanted to organise the registration of asylum seekers and refugees themselves – a responsibility that had previously resided with the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. At the time of writing, executive by-laws setting out how the asylum act was to be implemented in practice had yet to be drawn up. In the meantime, the UNHCR remained responsible for the registration of asylum seekers and refugees.[928]

Before examining the situation of Sudanese refugees in Egypt in more detail, it should be noted that the available figures on migration in the country diverged from one another and were difficult to interpret.[929]

As of 31 July 2025, there were 1,020,327 Sudanese asylum seekers and refugees registered with the UNHCR in Egypt. This number included 755,646 Sudanese, or nearly three-quarters of the country's entire refugee population. According to the Egyptian authorities, between 15 April 2023 and 31 January 2025, one and a half million people had fled to Egypt from Sudan.[930]

[926] UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Sudan situation*, last updated on 21 July 2025, accessed on 27 July 2025.
[927] WFP, *Refugees escaping Sudan face escalating hunger and malnutrition as food aid risks major reductions,* 30 June 2025.
[928] Confidential source, 15 December 2024. France 24, *Egypt's first-ever asylum law fuels concerns over refugee rights,* 20 December 2024. InfoMigrants, *Egypt enacts first asylum law sparking concerns over migrant rights,* 20 December 2024. EUobserver, *Egypt's new asylum law: aided by EU support, fuelled by repression,* 13 January 2025. Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP), *A crossroads for refugee rights, Examining Egypt's new asylum law,* 6 February 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[929] Confidential source, 25 August 2025.
[930] UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Egypt*, last updated on 31 July 2025, accessed on 8 August 2025.

One source noted that due to the withdrawal of American donor funding, aid to refugees in Egypt was coming under pressure. UNHCR and partner organisations provided various services to refugees, including support, food aid (via the WFP) and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). As a result of the aforementioned cuts, the UNHCR's medical programme to support individuals with immediately life-threatening conditions had been reduced. Approximately 20,000 refugees suffering from cancer, diabetes and heart and kidney problems, for example, no longer received aid from the UNHCR. Although they were suffering from serious illnesses, these were not categorised as being 'immediately life-threatening'.[931]

11.2.2 Grounds for residence

There were various ways for Sudanese to formalise their residence in Egypt. These are discussed below.

Registration with the UNHCR

In principle, Sudanese in Egypt could register as refugees with the UNHCR. In practice, however, they encountered various obstacles in doing so. Due to stricter entry conditions, Sudanese were increasingly being forced to enter Egypt illegally. They could register with the UNHCR only in Cairo. During their journey from the Sudanese-Egyptian border to Cairo, they were at risk of being arrested, detained and deported by the Egyptian authorities, since they had entered the country illegally and/or were not lawfully residing in Egypt at the time.[932] If Sudanese were victims of a crime on the way to Cairo, for example theft or rape, they did not report them to the Egyptian police because at that point they did not have the required residence documents and they feared being deported (see 11.2.3). In view of the aforementioned risks, some Sudanese remained in the south of Egypt and did not undertake the journey to the UNHCR office in Cairo, according to a source.[933]

It proved very risky for Sudanese to cross the Sudanese-Egyptian border illegally.[934] For instance, in June 2024 *Radio Dabanga* reported that dozens of Sudanese had died in the desert as a result of dehydration, overheating and starvation.[935]

The waiting time for an initial appointment with the UNHCR in Cairo was at least six months.[936] Vulnerable persons could qualify for an earlier appointment – for example, those suffering from serious illnesses, elderly persons, unaccompanied minors, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, seriously traumatised persons and victims of gender-related violence.[937]

According to a source, on 3 August 2025 there were 148,271 Sudanese waiting for an appointment. According to the same source, there were several reasons for this backlog. Firstly, UNHCR suffered from limited capacity and donor funding was not increasing in proportion to the asylum flow. Before the outbreak of the war in Sudan in April 2023, the UNHCR in Egypt registered approximately four thousand asylum seekers per month. During the conflict, this number rose to 40,000 registrations per month in peak months. In addition, the UNHCR was also responsible for extending

[931] NRC, *Wanhoop onder Soedanese vluchtelingen in Egypte nu medische hulp wegvalt: 'We zitten in een rampzalige situatie',* 25 May 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[932] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 79. Radio Dabanga, *Egypt deports more Sudanese, as bureaucracy makes asylum 'nearly impossible',* 18 June 2024. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[933] Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[934] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 79.
[935] Radio Dabanga, *Heatwave kills dozens of Sudanese en route to Egypt,* 11 June 2024.
[936] Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[937] Confidential source, 10 August 2025.

and updating registrations – for example, by recording births, deaths and divorces.[938]

Having registered with the UNHCR, a refugee had not yet formalised his or her residence in Egypt. Based on a UNHCR registration, the person had to request a so-called 'asylum-based residency' from the Egyptian authorities. This residency status gave the refugee access to education and healthcare. Waiting times for appointments with the authorities were also long. At the time of writing, a refugee registered with UNHCR had to wait a thousand days for an appointment with the Egyptian authorities.[939]

Entry and tourist visa

Some Sudanese opted to obtain an entry visa from Egypt's diplomatic mission in Port Sudan. According to sources, to do so they were required to pay 3,500 US dollars in bribes to a so-called 'broker' or 'intermediary', in other words not to an Egyptian government official. After entering the country legally, the holder of an entry visa could apply for a tourist visa.[940] A tourist visa was valid for three to six months and could be extended. This visa cost 25 US dollars per person. It was a single entry visa. A person leaving the country following entry would not be permitted to re-enter on the same visa.[941]

Residence permit based on registration with an educational institution

A parent could obtain an Egyptian residence permit if his/her child was registered with an Egyptian educational institution.[942] A source commented that this rarely occurred in practice. The Egyptian authorities were reluctant to admit Sudanese children to Egyptian educational institutions, because they wanted to avoid an increase in Sudanese claiming residence permits based on having a child who was registered with an educational institution, according to the source.[943]

11.2.3 Deportations

During the preceding reporting period, there were reports that the Egyptian authorities had detained Sudanese and/or deported Sudanese to Sudan. Both asylum seekers and registered refugees were alleged to have fallen victim to the aforementioned practice.[944] Such reports continued during the current reporting period.[945]

It was not known how many Sudanese were arrested and/or deported to Sudan by the Egyptian authorities.[946] *Radio Dabanga* reported that the Egyptian authorities had deported hundreds of Sudanese to Sudan on 12 June 2024.[947] One source had knowledge of 1,915 deportations in 2024. Between 1 January and 23 July 2025, the same source documented 2,746 deportations.[948]

[938] Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[939] Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[940] Confidential source, 24 March 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[941] Confidential source, 24 March 2025. Confidential source, 24 April 2025.
[942] Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[943] Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[944] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 79 and 80.
[945] Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[946] Amnesty International, *"Handcuffed like dangerous criminals", Arbitrary detention and forced returns of Sudanese refugees in Egypt*, June 2024, p. 28.
[947] Radio Dabanga, *Egypt deports more Sudanese,* 18 June 2024.
[948] Confidential source, 7 August 2025.

In June 2024, Amnesty published a study on Sudanese deported by Egypt. The international human rights organisation concluded that the Egyptian authorities had deported approximately eight hundred Sudanese refugees to Sudan between January and March 2024. Those deportations had taken place unlawfully and without procedural safeguards. Amnesty based this conclusion on interviews with nineteen people involved[949] and analyses of documents, photos, videos and satellite images.[950]

Amnesty also observed that the Egyptian police and border guards were increasingly performing identity checks, for example on the streets and in minibus taxis. Undocumented Sudanese in particular were subjected to arrests, detentions and deportations, but in some cases the same fate could befall Sudanese who were registered as asylum seekers of refugees with UNHCR.[951]

According to Amnesty, detention conditions for Sudanese in Egypt were poor. The detention centres were overcrowded and there was a lack of sanitation and healthcare. Rooms were unventilated or poorly ventilated and the food was insufficient and lacking in nutrition. Breathing problems and skin infections were common among detainees.[952] Moreover, detained Sudanese were not protected by procedural safeguards. They had no access to a lawyer, for instance. They could subsequently be deported from the country without any formality, according to Amnesty.[953] The Egyptian government rejected Amnesty's research findings.[954]

There was no information about whether deported Sudanese encountered problems with the Sudanese authorities on their return to Sudan.[955]

See section 12.2 for information on voluntary return from Egypt to Sudan.

11.3 Kenya

11.3.1 General asylum context

Kenya was home to a sizeable refugee community. As of 30 June 2025, this community comprised 854,876 registered refugees and asylum seekers, according to the Kenyan authorities and UNHCR. Most refugees and asylum seekers were from Somalia and South Sudan.[956] At the time of writing, Kenya was receiving approximately twenty to fifty asylum seekers per day, according to a source.[957]

There were two official refugee camps in Kenya: Kakuma in the north-west and Daadab in the east.[958] Most of the people living in the Kakuma camp were South Sudanese, with the majority in Daadab being Somali.[959] A source estimated that approximately 95% of the refugee population in Daadab consisted of Somalis. The same source observed that Kakuma was primarily inhabited by South Sudanese.

[949] The group of interviewees consisted of eight Sudanese refugees (including seven deported Sudanese), five friends and family members of Sudanese refugees who had been detained or deported, four Sudanese community leaders in Egypt, one refugee lawyer and one health worker.
[950] Amnesty International, *"Handcuffed like dangerous criminals",* June 2024, pp. 4, 5, 7b and 29.
[951] Amnesty International, *"Handcuffed like dangerous criminals",* June 2024, pp. 5, 11, 12, 16 and 17.
[952] Amnesty International, *"Handcuffed like dangerous criminals",* June 2024, pp. 5 and 24-26.
[953] Amnesty International, *"Handcuffed like dangerous criminals",* June 2024, pp. 5, 16 and 20.
[954] Amnesty International, *"Handcuffed like dangerous criminals",* June 2024, pp. 4, 8 and 28.
[955] Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[956] UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Kenya*, last updated on 30 June 2025, accessed on 22 July 2025.
[957] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[958] For administrative purposes, Kenya is divided into counties. Kakuma lies in Turkana County and Daadab in Garissa County.
[959] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 81.

Nevertheless, Kakuma also housed refugees from Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Great Lakes region, as well as several Afghans, according to the source.[960] In late June 2025, there were 739,443 registered refugees and asylum seekers living in Kakuma and Daadab (86.50%) and 115,433 in Nairobi (13.50%).[961]

In principle, recognised refugees living in the aforementioned refugees camps enjoyed free access to a range of services, including healthcare, education, sanitation, water and food.[962] However, during the reporting period, US funding for the reception of refugees ended. The US formerly paid for seventy percent of the refugee response in Kenya. Due to this development, the provision of services to refugees in Kenya came under pressure. For instance, the WFP was only able to provide refugees with one meal per day. [963] These cuts were resulting in crime, school non-attendance, malnutrition and disease outbreaks.[964] Refugees choosing to settle in urban areas like Nairobi were required to provide for themselves.[965]

The Department of Refugee Services (DRS) is the Kenyan government agency that handles the registration and status determination of asylum seekers and issues documents to asylum seekers and recognised refugees.[966] The DRS falls under the Kenyan Ministry of the Interior. If asylum status is granted, the holder receives a refugee identity card that is valid for five years. After five years, this document can be renewed.[967]

During the reporting period, the Kenyan authorities commenced implementation of the so-called 'Shirika Plan'. The aim of this plan was to develop the refugee camps in Kakuma and Daadab into viable and self-sufficient communities. In view of the fact that both camps have been in existence for decades, simply continuing to supply emergency relief to the refugees was not considered sustainable. The Shirika Plan was aimed at the socio-economic integration of the refugees as well as the surrounding host communities. Hence the plan was given the name *Shirika*, Kiswahili for 'coming together'.[968] At the time of writing, it was unknown what impact the aforementioned cuts would have on the implementation of the Shirika Plan. Another concern was the backlog of work at the DRS.[969] According to a source, in late June 2025 the backlog was more than 110,000 asylum applications.[970]

11.3.2 Asylum practice

In late October 2023, Kenya had 10,762 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers.[971] By late May 2025, the number had risen to 12,994. One source described this increase as a 'slight rise' in the Kenyan asylum context.[972]

[960] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[961] UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Kenya*, last updated on 30 June 2025, accessed on 22 July 2025.
[962] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 82.
[963] Confidential source, 27 June 2025. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[964] Confidential source, 27 June 2025.
[965] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 82. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[966] See https://refugee.go.ke for more information on the DRS.
[967] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 81. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[968] Kiswahili is a Bantu language that contains many Arabic loan words and serves as the *lingua franca* (common language) for East Africa. DRS, *The Kenya Shirika Plan, Overview and action plan,* April 2023. UNHCR, *Shirika Plan, Socioeconomic hubs for integrated refugee inclusion in Kenya,* undated, accessed on 22 July 2025. Confidential source, 7 April 2025.
[969] Confidential source, 7 April 2025.
[970] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[971] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 81.
[972] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.

Sudanese asylum seekers were required to make a plausible case for international protection on individual grounds to the Kenyan authorities. Depending on the case, handling took three to nine months. The Kenyan authorities would reject asylum applications if they considered it likely that the asylum seeker had been involved in war crimes.[973]

Between April 2023 and June 2025, the Kenyan authorities approved 1,966 asylum applications from Sudanese. As far as could be ascertained, they had not rejected any Sudanese asylum seekers. One source placed this fact within the context of the open door policy operated by Kenya. The approval percentage for asylum applications in general was approximately 98%, according to the source.[974]

Most Sudanese asylum seekers reached Kenya via South Sudan. They generally went to the registration centre in Nairobi that was jointly run by the DRS and UNHCR.[975] One source observed that most asylum seekers from Sudan had worked in the service sector before the war, for example as doctors, lawyers or judges. Rather than living in an official refugee camp, they hoped to build new lives in an urban area like Nairobi, according to the source.[976]

11.4 Chad

11.4.1 General asylum context

Even before the outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023, eastern Chad already hosted 400,000 Sudanese refugees. They had fled the massacres in Darfur in the early 21st century (see 2.3.1).[977] Between mid-April 2023 and late June 2025, nearly 860,000 Sudanese and approximately 274,000 Chadian returnees fled from Sudan to eastern Chad.[978] In this connection, the term 'returnee' refers to a person with Chadian nationality who had lived in Sudan for a long time and chose to return to Chad.[979]

In the context of eastern Chad, the difference between Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees could be regarded as relative. The border region between Darfur and eastern Chad was largely inhabited by the same population groups on either side of the border, for example the Masalit and Zaghawa. Depending on the security situation, the degree of food security and economic opportunities, over the years inhabitants of the border region had alternately settled on the Sudanese or the Chadian side of the border. Thus, persons with Chadian nationality had in the past been registered in eastern Chad as Sudanese refugees, or Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad had posed as Chadians.[980]

One source pointed out that not all the inhabitants of the border region between Sudan and Chad had identity documents, meaning that it was sometimes difficult to establish whether a person was Sudanese or Chadian. This source also had

[973] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 81. Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[974] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[975] This centre is on General Mathenge Drive in Westlands, a neighbourhood in Nairobi.
[976] Confidential source, 30 June 2025.
[977] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 82. Trouw, *'Deze situatie is een tikkende tijdbom',* 24 June 2024.
[978] UNICEF, *UNICED Executive Director concludes three-day mission to Chad, meeting with some of the 700,000 children displaced across border from Sudan,* 23 June 2025.
[979] Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[980] Hari, *De tolk,* published in 2008, pp. 79 and 80. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 129, 130, 139, 191, 194 and 195.

knowledge of members of the middle class who possessed both Sudanese and Chadian identity documents.[981]

During the reporting period, a shift took place with regard to the asylum flow in eastern Chad. The preceding reporting period saw Masalit in particular crossing the border from West Darfur via Adré[982].[983] In mid-May 2025, a source described the inflow via Adré as 'a trickle'.[984] Presumably, the reduced inflow via Adré was due to the fact that most Masalit had by then fled to eastern Chad and many others had been killed (see section 5.10).

As a result of the escalation of violence in North Darfur, such as the siege of El Fasher and the destruction of the Zamzam displacement camp (see 2.5.8), the inflow via Tine increased. Between late April 2025 and late June 2025, approximately 40,000 to 46,000 new Sudanese refugees arrived in Tine.[985] Most belonged to the Zaghawa community, but other population groups were also represented, such as the Gouran,[986] who, like the Masalit and Zaghawa, speak a Nilo-Saharan language (see section 1.1).[987]

There were two types of refugee camps in eastern Chad. Near the border with Sudan there were informal camps that had come into existence spontaneously. In addition, there were official camps managed by the UNHCR located further into the interior.[988] The Chadian authorities and the international community wanted Sudanese to be temporarily received in informal camps near towns on the Chadian side of the border. The intention was for them to be registered there before being transferred to one of the official camps further from the border with Sudan. In practice, however, the flow of refugees stagnated in border towns.[989] For example, in late June 2025 the transit camp at Adré numbered approximately 235,000 Sudanese.[990]

Many Sudanese preferred to remain in border towns like Adré. Such locations were closer to their area of origin in Darfur, which was economically more developed than eastern Chad.[991] A minority of Sudanese refugees who belonged to the relatively prosperous middle class had business interests and/or real estate in Sudan. These refugees travelled back and forth between the two countries, crossing the porous border at unguarded points. It was unknown whether some of these Sudanese 'commuters' encountered problems upon their temporary return to Sudan, for example from the RSF. One source did not rule out potential risks upon returning and emphasised that most Sudanese refugees absolutely did not want to return to Sudan.[992]

[981] Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[982] The border town of Adré owes its existence to a nearby lake that does not dry up during the dry season. During the colonial period, the French established a garrison town there. Behrends, *Lifeworlds in crisis,* published in 2024, pp. 81 and 82.
[983] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 82.
[984] Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[985] MSF, *Sudanese refugees in Chad are safe from bombs, but struggling to survive,* 25 June 2025. The Independent, *Sudan civil war overwhelms border town in neigbor Chad as refugees find little help,* 29 June 2025.
[986] Also known as 'Gorane'.
[987] Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[988] This is because international refugee law stipulates that formal refugee camps should be located at a sufficient distance from conflict areas.
[989] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, pp. 82 and 83. Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[990] Confidential source, 14 May 2025. The Independent, *Sudan civil war overwhelms border town in neigbor Chad as refugees find little help,* 29 June 2025.
[991] The Independent, *Sudan civil war overwhelms border town in neigbor Chad as refugees find little help,* 29 June 2025. Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[992] Confidential source, 14 May 2025. Confidential source, 10 September 2025.

At Farchana, a town situated further from the border, there was a formal refugee camp.[993] This camp was approximately an hour and half's drive from Adré. The accommodation in Farchana was better than in the informal camps, but it was located at a greater distance from the Sudanese border. The first generation of Sudanese refugees were housed at Farchana in the early 21st century. The 'Farchana 1' refugee camp was built for them. An extension to the camp, 'Farchana 2' was built for the new wave of refugees from Sudan.[994]

In view of the permanent nature of the Sudanese refugees' presence in Chad, the Chadian government and the international community came to the understanding that the formal refugee camps needed to change into self-sufficient villages, since it was not considered sustainable to keep providing emergency relief to a refugee population indefinitely. For this reason, in partnership with the international community, the Chadian authorities developed a plan to implement the so-called 'Nexus approach', bringing together emergency relief, development cooperation and peace-building. In this approach, refugees and returnees were housed together with the local population as much as possible.[995] Investments were made in streets with sewerage and wells, and in the provision of education and healthcare.[996] At the time of writing, a pilot was underway in three provinces in eastern Chad, namely Ouaddaï, Sila and Wadi Fari.[997]

11.4.2 Living conditions

In the preceding reporting period, there was a lack of shelter, water, food, healthcare and education in the refugee camps in eastern Chad. This applied to the informal camps at the border and the official camps further into the interior. As a result, the Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad faced food insecurity. The World Health Organization (WHO) recorded the deaths of 157 children who had succumbed to malnutrition in eastern Chad during the month of January 2024.[998]

During the reporting period, the WFP faced a big funding shortfall and the refugee response in eastern Chad remained inadequate. As a result, there were shortages of food, latrines and water, among other things, in the camps. The Sudanese refugee population in Chad suffered from malnutrition and diseases like measles, malaria, skin infections, hepatitis, typhus, polio and cholera. Moreover, crime in and around the camps was increasing and tensions were emerging between the refugees and host communities over the use of water and farmland.[999]

[993] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 83. Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[994] UNHCR, *Sudanese refugees fleeing Darfur find safety in Chad,* 29 September 2023. Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[995] WFP, *Operationalising the HDP Nexus in WFP Western Africa, Case study: Chad,* August 2024, pp. 4, 7, 9, 10, 15 and 20. Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[996] Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[997] Confidential source, 10 September 2025.
[998] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 83.
[999] Al Jazeera, *Starving to death is as scary as the war for Sudanese refugees in Chad,* 18 June 2024. Al Jazeera, *Tensions bubble as Sudanese refugees feel resentment from Chadian hosts,* 20 June 2024. Confidential source, 14 May 2025. Sudan Tribune, *Desperate Sudanese refugees overwhelm Chad borders, MSF urges urgent aid,* 3 June 2025. Trouw, *'Deze situatie is een tikkende tijdbom',* 24 June 2024. MSF, *Sudanese refugees in Chad are safe from bombs, but struggling to survive,* 25 June 2025. The Independent, *Sudan civil war overwhelms border town in neigbor Chad as refugees find little help,* 29 June 2025. MSF, *Eastern Chad, Tackling a water crisis amid soaring temperatures and shrinking funds*, 28 July 2025.

For instance, refugees in the informal refugee camp at Tine slept on the desert floor with branches and pieces of cloth as their only form of shelter.[1000] In the formal refugee camp of Aboutengue,[1001] a refugee had nine litres of water at his or her disposal on average daily,[1002] whereas the WHO guideline is twenty litres per day.[1003]

In the preceding reporting period, there were concerns about the security of the Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. The informal camps in particular were located close to RSF areas in Darfur. For instance, Adré is one and a half hour's drive from El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur. The refugees feared that RSF fighters and members of the affiliated militias would infiltrate the camps to kill Masalit leaders, journalists and human rights activists.[1004] These concerns remained during the current reporting period, the more so since refugee camps with tens of thousands of inhabitants were guarded by three to five Chadian gendarmes.[1005] As far as could be ascertained, no targeted attacks took place in the refugee camps in eastern Chad during the reporting period.[1006]

However, during the reporting period, security incidents did occur in and around the refugee camps in eastern Chad. For instance, women gathering firewood outside the camps were regularly attacked and raped.[1007] On 23 May 2025, four Sudanese girls went in search of firewood outside the Kounongou refugee camp, close to West Darfur. They were attacked by a group of four young Chadian men armed with sticks. Two girls were raped while two other girls managed to escape and raised the alarm with the camp authorities. The Chadian police later apprehended the suspects.[1008]

11.5 Uganda

11.5.1 General asylum context

Uganda hosted a sizeable refugee community. As of 30 June 2025, this community comprised 1,927,593 registered refugees and asylum seekers, according to the Ugandan authorities and UNHCR. Most of the refugees and asylum seekers were from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan, specifically 1,016,247 South Sudanese (52.7%), 629,961 Congolese (32.7%) and 85,384 Sudanese (4.4%).[1009] This made Uganda the host country in Africa with the largest number of refugees.[1010] The figures cited above were not absolute, because some refugees did not register or shuttled back and forth between Uganda and their countries of origin.[1011]

[1000] Sudan Tribune, *Desperate Sudanese refugees overwhelm Chad borders, MSF urges urgent aid,* 3 June 2025. The Independent, *Sudan civil war overwhelms border town in neigbor Chad as refugees find little help,* 29 June 2025.
[1001] Aboutengue is located beside the town of Berbera, approximately two hours' drive from Adré. Like Farchana, the camp is home to many refugees who previously lived in the informal camp at Adré. Confidential source, 3 November 2025.
[1002] MSF, *Eastern Chad,* 28 July 2025.
[1003] WHO, *Water sanitation and health,* undated, accessed on 9 October 2025.
[1004] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 83.
[1005] Trouw, *'Deze situatie is een tikkende tijdbom',* 24 June 2024. Confidential source, 28 July 2025.
[1006] Confidential source, 14 May 2025.
[1007] Trouw, *'Deze situatie is een tikkende tijdbom',* 24 June 2024.
[1008] Radio Dabanga, *'Sudanese refugee girls raped in Chad' as Darfur crisis deepens,* 26 May 2025.
[1009] UNHCR, *Uganda comprehensive refugee response portal*, last updated on 30 June 2025, accessed on 25 July 2025.
[1010] The Guardian, *Trump's aid cuts blamed as food rations stopped for a million refugees in Uganda,* 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 28 May 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Gastvrij Oeganda kan de druk niet meer aan, Vluchtelingen 'eten bladeren met zout',* 18 October 2025.
[1011] Floris Bijlsma, *Oeganda, Alles is mogelijk,* published in 2025, p. 413.

The Refugee Act of 2006 regulates asylum flows in Uganda.[1012] This act is based on the UN Refugee Convention of 1951. The Office of the Prime-Minister (OPM) is responsible for the reception of refugees and the management of refugee settlements.[1013] To this end, this Ugandan government entity collaborates with national and international agencies and aid organizations, such as UNHCR. The OPM also handles the registration and status determination of asylum seekers and issues documents to asylum seekers and recognised refugees. The OPM is headquartered in Old Kampala.[1014] According to a source, in early July 2025 the OPM had a backlog of approximately 39,000 asylum applications.[1015]

During the reporting period, US funding for the reception of refugees in Uganda ended.[1016] This change was accompanied by consequences that may be illustrated in various ways. Previously, USAID, the former development agency of the US government, funded eighty percent of the refugee response in Uganda. Due to the termination of USAID, the budget for the reception of refugees fell from 120 million US dollars to approximately 80 million US dollars in 2024-2025, i.e. a reduction of approximately thirty percent. In the same period, the number of refugees increased from one and a half million to nearly two million.[1017]

Another source disclosed that from April 2025, the WFP was able to provide 28,000 Ugandan shillings per month to newly arrived refugees.[1018] Following a stay of three months, this amount fell to 18,000 Ugandan shillings per month.[1019] After six months, the refugee received a monthly amount of 10,000 Ugandan shillings.[1020] In time, the financial support ended. Only the most vulnerable refugees continued to receive a monthly allowance.[1021] For example, the sick, the elderly, the disabled and breastfeeding mothers.[1022]

In early May 2025, the British daily *The Guardian* reported that one million refugees in Uganda were completely cut off from food aid in the form of financial assistance.[1023] A source reported that fifteen percent of refugee children in Uganda were malnourished.[1024]

It was not only food aid to refugees in Uganda that was under threat, so were other services, such as healthcare and legal assistance. As a result, the refugee community increasingly faced issues including malnutrition, mental health problems, suicide, prostitution, domestic violence, school non-attendance and crime.[1025]

[1012] The text of the act may be accessed via ***Refworld***, a UNHCR knowledge bank about refugees and statelessness.
[1013] The Ugandan government consciously avoids the terms 'camps' and 'refugee camps'. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 85.
[1014] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 84. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Bijlsma, *Oeganda,* published in 2025, pp. 411, 453, 457 and 458. Nederlands Dagblad, *Gastvrij Oeganda kan de druk niet meer aan,* 18 October 2025.
[1015] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[1016] The Guardian, *Trump's aid cuts blamed as food rations stopped for a million refugees in Uganda,* 8 May 2025. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), *Safe, but not surviving, Sudan's urban refugees in Uganda,* June 2025, p. 2. Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Africa Intelligence, *Museveni faces looming refugee crisis as foreign aid diminishes,* 29 July 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Gastvrij Oeganda kan de druk niet meer aan,* 18 October 2025.
[1017] Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Africa Intelligence, *Museveni faces looming refugee crisis as foreign aid diminishes,* 29 July 2025.
[1018] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 25 July 2025, 28,000 Ugandan shillings were equivalent to 6.64 euros.
[1019] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 25 July 2025, 18,000 Ugandan shillings were equivalent to 4.27 euros.
[1020] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 25 July 2025, 10,000 Ugandan shillings were equivalent to 2.37 euros.
[1021] Confidential source, 2 July 2025.
[1022] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1023] The Guardian, *Trump's aid cuts blamed as food rations stopped for a million refugees in Uganda,* 8 May 2025.
[1024] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1025] Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Gastvrij Oeganda kan de druk niet meer aan,* 18 October 2025.

11.5.2 Asylum practice

In late October 2024, Uganda had more than 16,000 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers.[1026] By late June 2025, the number had risen to 85,384.[1027] One source described this increase as a 'sharp rise' in the Ugandan asylum context.[1028] For Sudanese asylum seekers, a *prima facie* policy was in force.[1029]

Most Sudanese reached Uganda overland via the border with South Sudan or arrived by air at the international airport at Entebbe. Sudanese entering from South Sudan crossed the border at Nimule (South Sudan) and Nyumanzi (Uganda).[1030] There were first registered and screened in Nyumanzi and then directed to a settlement at Bweyale, a town in Kiryandongo district.[1031] This settlement was specifically designated as a location for the registration of Sudanese asylum seekers.[1032]

Sudanese arriving at Entebbe airport generally entered the country on tourist visas.[1033] They then also had to go to Kiryandongo for their asylum applications. The settlement is approximately four hours' drive north of Kampala, the Ugandan capital.[1034] An exception applied to vulnerable Sudanese; they could register at the head office of the OPM in Old Kampala. This category consisted of seriously ill persons, disabled persons, children with special needs and pregnant women.[1035]

An asylum seeker submitting an application for asylum in Uganda was required to hand over their passport to the Ugandan authorities. This was also true for Sudanese asylum seekers. Once the person was recognised as a refugee, they were given a Refugee Identity Card.[1036] A document of this type was valid for five years and could subsequently be extended.[1037] A refugee could also apply for a Convention Travel Document (CTD). This document allowed them to make foreign trips, except to the country of origin. A person would not have access to the surrendered passport as long as he or she was claiming refugee status.[1038]

Recognised refugees, including Sudanese, enjoyed freedom of movement in Uganda. Sudanese who remained in Kiryandongo had free access to healthcare and education. They were also given a plot of land on loan, on which they could grow crops.[1039] For access to water, they paid one thousand Ugandan shillings[1040] per month towards the maintenance of the water pump.[1041]

[1026] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 84.
[1027] UNHCR, *Uganda comprehensive refugee response portal*, last updated on 30 June 2025, accessed on 25 July 2025.
[1028] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1029] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 84. Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1030] Nyumanzi is in Adjumani, a district in West Nile, a region in north-western Uganda.
[1031] Kiryandongo is located in Bunyoro, a region in western Uganda.
[1032] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 85. Confidential source, 13 March 2025. Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Nederlands Dagblad, *Gastvrij Oeganda kan de druk niet meer aan,* 18 October 2025.
[1033] A Ugandan tourist visa was valid for a maximum of three months.
[1034] Confidential source, 13 March 2025. Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1035] Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1036] Confidential source, 3 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1037] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 85. Confidential source, 26 July 2025. Confidential source, 8 August 2025.
[1038] Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1039] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 85. Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Bijlsma, *Oeganda,* published in 2025, pp. 411 and 412. Nederlands Dagblad, *Gastvrij Oeganda kan de druk niet meer aan,* 18 October 2025.
[1040] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 4 October 2025, 1,000 Ugandan shillings were equivalent to 0.24 euros.
[1041] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 85. Confidential source, 2 July 2025.

During the preceding reporting period, there were reports that access to drinking water, healthcare, education and shelter in Kiryandongo was inadequate.[1042] In the current reporting period, too, there allegedly was a lack of clean drinking water, sanitation and healthcare in Kiryandongo. The tents allegedly provided insufficient protection against severe weather conditions.[1043] A Sudanese refugee in Kiryandongo told *Nederlands Dagblad* that he was forced to eat green leaves with salt.[1044]

On 10 and 12 July 2025, hundreds of South Sudanese young men attacked the part of Kiryandongo that was inhabited by Sudanese with machetes,[1045] clubs and knives. The attackers belonged to the Nuer, a Nilotic population group. One Sudanese refugee was killed and dozens were injured.[1046] The violence stemmed in part from disputes between the two communities about the distribution and use of land, water pumps and food rations. The Ugandan government army[1047] and police restored order. On 15 July 2025, approximately 130 South Sudanese suspects were arrested. Fourteen of them were subsequently released. Most of those arrested faced criminal prosecution.[1048] It was unclear whether the fourteen individuals had been released ahead of criminal proceedings.

Sudanese refugees could also settle in an urban area such as Kampala. In that case, they were expected to provide for themselves.[1049] Most of the Sudanese in Uganda were originally from urban centres such as Khartoum and El Fasher. They had typically enjoyed higher education and had worked in the service sector in Sudan, for example as lawyers. For this reason, many tried to build new lives in urban areas such as Kampala, Entebbe and Arua.[1050] Life in the rural context of Kiryandongo did not match with their higher education background, work experience and urban lifestyle.[1051]

Living conditions for Sudanese in urban areas were no easier. They faced high rents and had limited access to education and the formal economy. A Sudanese refugee in Kampala told the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) that they could permit themselves one and a half meals per day.[1052]

[1042] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 85.
[1043] Sudan Tribune, *Dire conditions plague Sudanese refugees in Uganda's Kiryandongo camp,* 17 June 2024.
[1044] Nederlands Dagblad, *Gastvrij Oeganda kan de druk niet meer aan,* 18 October 2025.
[1045] Also referred to as *pangas*.
[1046] Sudans Post, *Brutal assault leaves Sudanese refugees wounded in Uganda,* 11 July 2025. Confidential source, 14 July 2025. SWM, *Sudanese refugee killed, dozens injured in targeted attacks in Uganda,* 19 July 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Sudanese refugee murdered, scores wounded in knife attack in camp Kiryandongo, Uganda,* 29 July 2025.
[1047] The Ugandan armed forces are known as the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF). See https://www.updf.go.ug for more information on the UPDF.
[1048] Confidential source, 22 July 2025, pp. 1-5.
[1049] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 85. Confidential source, 2 July 2025. Confidential source, 4 July 2025. Bijlsma, *Oeganda,* published in 2025, p. 411.
[1050] Arua lies in the north-western West Nile region.
[1051] NRC, *Safe, but not surviving,* June 2025, pp. 1-3. Confidential source, 4 July 2025.
[1052] NRC, *Safe, but not surviving,* June 2025, pp. 2 and 3.

12 Return

12.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the return of Sudanese to their country from abroad in more detail. Section 12.2 describes the voluntary return of Sudanese from Egypt. Section 12.3 considers the living conditions encountered by returnees in their areas of origin. Section 12.4 deals with the way in which members of the Sudanese diaspora were monitored by both the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Force (RSF).

As far as could be ascertained, no reports appeared during the reporting period of Sudanese who had returned to Sudan from the Western world.[1053] For this reason, it remained unclear whether Sudanese encountered problems with the Sudanese authorities upon their return from the West simply because they had spent time in a Western country.

During the reporting period, only the international airport of Port Sudan was operational.[1054] In October 2025, a civilian aircraft landed at Khartoum's international airport for the first time since April 2023 (see also 2.3.2). This prompted the RSF to attack the airport of the Sudanese capital with drones.[1055]

12.2 Voluntary return from Egypt

During the reporting period, thousands of Sudanese returned to Sudan from Egypt. The SAF recaptured El Gezira in January 2025 (see 2.5.4) and Khartoum in March 2025 (see 2.5.7). Many Sudanese refugees in Egypt were from El Gezira and Khartoum. For many, the aforementioned victories were the direct reason to return to their areas of origin in Sudan.[1056] According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 72,039 Sudanese returned to Sudan from Egypt in the first three months of 2025.[1057]

A source confirmed that Sudanese were increasingly returning from Egypt to Sudan. This source had knowledge of an assembly point for Sudanese returnees in the city centre of Cairo. Every day, two to three buses left from there for the border with Sudan, with each bus transporting fifty returnees. According to the same source, a returnee paid approximately six hundred Egyptian pounds[1058] for the bus journey from Cairo to Abu Simbel, the last location before the border with Sudan. The final stage from Abu Simbel to Wadi Halfa, a Sudanese border city in Northern State, cost approximately two hundred Egyptian pounds,[1059] according to the source.[1060]

[1053] Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[1054] Sudan Tribune, *Sudan to reopen Khartoum airport in October after conflict repairs,* 15 August 2025. Confidential source, 17 August 2025.
[1055] Sudans Post, *Why the RSF is targeting Khartoum and its airport?,* 22 October 2025. Al Jazeera, *Sudan's Khartoum targeted by RSF drones for third day after airport reopens,* 23 October 2025. Sudan Tribune, *RSF drone attacks hit Khartoum airport for third day,* 23 October 2025. Al Jazeera, *RSF drones target Sudan's Khartoum in fourth day of sustained attacks,* 24 October 2025.
[1056] Confidential source, 24 April 2025. The Independent, *Sudanese return to their homeland, hoping for stability but finding it still wrecked by war,* 30 April 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[1057] IOM, *Sudan crisis regional response, Situation update,* April 2025, p. 4.
[1058] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 17 August 2025, 600 Egyptian pounds were equivalent to 17.16 euros.
[1059] According to CoinMill.com (an online exchange rate calculator), on 17 August 2025, 200 Egyptian pounds were equivalent to 5.72 euros.
[1060] Confidential source, 24 April 2025.

On 17 July 2025, a new initiative was launched in Egypt. From that date, the Egyptian authorities provided free train rides weekly from Cairo to Aswan, a city in the south of the country, for Sudanese returnees. From Aswan, they could continue their journeys to Sudan by ferry or bus. By early August 2025, hundreds of Sudanese had returned to Sudan from Egypt by using this option.[1061]

Sudanese returning to Sudan from Egypt were not only motivated to do so by the victories of the SAF in El Gezira and Khartoum. Many were forced to return to their country of birth by the living conditions in Egypt. They scarcely had access to income, healthcare and education in Egypt. Additionally, Sudanese were subject to unlawful arrest and deportation to Sudan (see 11.2.3).[1062] For instance, one source had knowledge of a Sudanese who had returned to Sudan from Egypt because they no longer dared to walk the streets in Egypt for fear of being arrested.[1063]

12.3 Conditions on return

Although many Sudanese – both Sudanese refugees abroad and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – wished to return to their areas of origin in Sudan, according to the IOM, the conditions for a safe and lasting return were not in place. In reaching its conclusion, the international NGO considered the fact that returnees faced a lack of healthcare, protection, education, food and infrastructure.[1064]

The above conclusion of the IOM was echoed in other reporting on the living conditions of returnees in Khartoum. The city was largely in rubble and there was a lack of water (including drinking water), electricity, public transport and internet service. In addition, many markets and hospitals remained closed and some school buildings were being used as improvised mass graves. Moreover, there were numerous explosive remnants of war in Khartoum, such as landmines, that had to be cleared.[1065]

Sources confirmed that returnees faced difficult living conditions on their return. One source knew a Sudanese who had fled Singa, a city in Sennar, before it was captured by the RSF in June 2024. After the SAF had recaptured Singa in November 2024 (see 2.5.3), the person returned to Sudan from Uganda, travelling back to Singa from Port Sudan via Kassala. On the way, they passed several SAF checkpoints without incident. Upon their return, they found the houses and vehicles in Singa burned out. The RSF had used the wooden beds of the person in question as firewood.[1066]

Another source cited the example of a Sudanese who was no longer able to remain in Saudi Arabia because the visa fees in that country had become unaffordable. The person returned to the north of Omdurman, but was faced with a lack of electricity, food, water and healthcare.[1067]

[1061] The Independent, *Egypt provides free train rides for Sudanese refugees returning home,* 21 July 2025. The EastAfrican, *Hundreds of Sudanese depart Cairo on train journey back home,* 2 August 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[1062] Radio Dabanga, *Surge in Sudanese returnees from Egypt driven by economic woes,* 9 October 2024. Confidential source, 24 April 2025. Confidential source, 7 August 2025.
[1063] Confidential source, 3 April 2025.
[1064] IOM, *First recorded drop in Sudan displacement, yet humanitarian crisis persists,* 25 March 2025.
[1065] Ayin Network, *No return to Khartoum,* 21 April 2025. Ayin Network, *Returning home to central Sudan, hope and hardships,* 21 May 2025. Sudans Post, *Teachers warn: Khartoum still a war zone,* 16 June 2025. Radio Dabanga, *Poor security, services, water, force returnees to leave Khartoum for states,* 23 June 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[1066] Confidential source, 13 March 2025.
[1067] Confidential source, 24 April 2025.

12.4 Monitoring of the Sudanese diaspora

Sources indicated that members of the Sudanese diaspora were monitored by both the SAF and the RSF. In particular, activists and journalists who made critical statements about the warring parties could attract negative attention from representatives of those actors. That negative attention generally took the form of intimidation.[1068] The scale on which monitoring of the diaspora took place remained unclear.[1069]

Below are several anecdotal examples which reveal that members of the Sudanese diaspora were monitored. One source had knowledge of a Sudanese activist who had fled to one of the Gulf states. Thereupon, the intelligence services, who were affiliated with the SAF, visited the activist's family members who had remained in Sudan in order to put pressure on the activist.[1070]

Another source cited the example of a Sudanese journalist who had written critical pieces about the RSF in an East African country. In response, a representative of the RSF in that country sent the journalist a threatening WhatsApp message. It stated that the journalist's remaining family members in RSF territory would be targeted if the journalist continued to write critically about the RSF.[1071] See section 5.6 for information on the situation of journalists in Sudan.

The fact that members of the Sudanese diaspora were monitored was also revealed by the case of the well-known activist Mohamed Adam, better known as 'Tupac'.[1072] In his case, the monitoring escalated to transnational repression. During the revolution against Bashir (see 1.2), Adam was part of a militant vanguard of activists called Angry Without Borders.[1073] During the anti-government protests in 2018 and 2019, these activists erected barricades and threw back teargas canisters fired by the riot police. As the conflict between the SAF and the RSF developed, some members of this group of activists joined the SAF (see 2.2.1). However, Adam maintained his position that the pro-democracy youth should adopt a neutral stance and continue to strive for a peaceful solution. As a result, he attracted negative attention from the Sudanese authorities.[1074] Adam had been registered as a refugee with UNHCR in Libya since November 2024. On 19 May 2025, employees of the Sudanese Embassy in Tripoli detained him and held him prisoner on the embassy premises for one day. They then handed him over to the Libyan authorities[1075].[1076] As far as could be ascertained, Adam had not been extradited to Sudan up to the time of writing.[1077]

[1068] Confidential source, 1 May 2025. Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[1069] Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[1070] Confidential source, 8 May 2025.
[1071] Confidential source, 1 July 2025.
[1072] This nickname referred to the African-American rap artist and actor Tupac Amaru Shakur (1971-1996).
[1073] Known as *Ghadiboun Bila Houdoud* in Arabic.
[1074] Confidential source, 8 May 2025. Ayin Network, *Targeted from all sides: Tupac detained and missing in Libya,* 27 May 2025.
[1075] The authorities in question were the Government of National Unity (GNU). The GNU is based in the Libyan capital Tripoli and is recognised by the international community. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Libya*, February 2023, pp. 7 and 8.
[1076] Radio Dabanga, *Sudanese embassy accused of 'unlawful arrest' of activist Tupac in Libya,* 20 May 2025. Libya Crimes Watch (LCW), *LCW calls for the release of a Sudanese asylum seeker and activist detained in Tripoli,* 22 May 2025. Ayin Network, *Targeted from all sides: Tupac detained and missing in Libya,* 27 May 2025.
[1077] Confidential source, 23 May 2025.

13 Appendices

13.1 Abbreviations and foreign terms

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACJPS	African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AU	African Union
AWSD	Aid Worker Security Database
BBMB	El Bara Bin Malik Brigade
CAR	Central African Republic
COI	Country of Origin Information
COR	Commission of Refugees
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CTD	Convention Travel Document
Darfur	Land of the Fur (literally)
DNHR	Darfur Network for Human Rights
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRS	Department of Refugee Services
DWJF	Darfur Women Journalists Forum
ERR	Emergency Response Room
EU	European Union
FCPU	Family and Child Protection Unit
FFM	fact-finding mission
FGM	female genital mutilation
GIS	General Intelligence Service
GSLF	Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
Janjaweed	devils/evil spirits/shooters on horses (literally)
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
JFASM	Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements
JPA	Juba Peace Agreement
LAAF	Libyan Arab Armed Forces
liwat	'sodomy' (Arabic)
LNA	Libyan National Army
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
mazoon	legal assistant who performs a marriage
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MIS	Military Intelligence Service
MSF	Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins sans frontières*)
mustanfareen	mobilised civilians (pro-SAF)
nahab	armed bandits (Darfuri context)
NCP	National Congress Party

NGO	non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OPM	Office of the Prime-Minister
OSINT	Open Source Intelligence
PNG	persona non grata
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
RSF	Reporters Without Borders (*Reporters sans frontières*)
RWCHR	Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SAPA	Sudanese American Physicians Association
SARHO	Sudan Agency for Relief and Humanitarian Operations
SDN	Sudan Doctors Network
SGVED	Sudanese Group for Victims of Enforced Disappearance
SHRH	Sudan Human Rights Hub
SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
SJS	Sudanese Journalists Syndicate
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLA/AW	SLA faction of Abdel Wahid
SLA/MM	SLA faction of Minni Minawi
SLM-TC	Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council
Somoud	Resilience (civilian coalition)
SPLM-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition
SPLM-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
SSF	Sudan Shield Forces
Taasis	Foundation (RSF-affiliated coalition)
Tagadom	Progress (former civilian coalition)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSC	Transitional Sovereignty Council
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSG	Secretary-General of the United Nations
US	United States
VPN	Virtual Private Network
wali	governor (administrative) / guardian (legal)
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
PC	Penal Code

13.2 Newspapers and news and knowledge platforms

Africa Intelligence
African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS)
African Union (AU)
Agenzia Nova
Aid Worker Security Database (AWSD)
Al Arabiya
Al Jazeera

Al-Monitor
Amnesty International
Assayha
Ayin Network
Bellingcat
British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
Centre for Information Resilience (CIR)
Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)
Columbia Journalism Review (CJR)
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)
Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR)
Darfur24
De Morgen
Department of Refugee Services (DRS)
Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs
EUobserver
Fanack Water
Financial Times (FT)
France 24
Human Rights and Development Organization Centre (HUDO Centre)
Human Rights Watch (HRW)
InfoMigrants
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)
International Criminal Court (ICC)
International Crisis Group (ICG)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Le Monde
Libya Crimes Watch (LCW)
Middle East Eye (MEE)
Moatinoon
Nederlands Dagblad
Nederlandse Omroep Stichting (Dutch Broadcasting Foundation, NOS)
Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ)
New York Times
Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant (NRC)
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Open Doors
Radio Dabanga
Radio Tamazuj
Relief International
Reporters sans frontières (Reporters Without Borders, RSF)
Reuters
RTL Nieuws
Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A)
Sudan News Agency (SUNA)
Sudan Research, Analysis and Advocacy
Sudan Today
Sudan Tribune
Sudan War Monitor (SWM)
Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sudans Post
Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)

Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
The EastAfrican
The Economist
The Guardian
The Independent
The Jamestown Foundation
The New Humanitarian (TNH)
The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)
United Nations (UN)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Population Fund (UNPF)
United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
United States Department of State (USDoS)
United States Department of the Treasury
World Food Programme (WFP)
World Health Organization (WHO)

13.3 Books

Baaijens, Arita
- *Woestijnnomaden, Trektocht door Sudan*, published in 2003.

Behrends, Andrea
- *Lifeworlds in crisis, Making refugees in the Chad-Sudan borderlands*, published in 2024.

Bijlsma, Floris
- *Oeganda, Alles is mogelijk,* published in 2025.

Grimes, Barbara F. (ed.)
- *Ethnologue, Volume 1, Languages of the world*, published in 2000.

Hari, Daoud
- *De tolk, Mijn verhaal van Darfur,* published in 2008.

Olson, James S.
- *The peoples of Africa, An ethnohistorical dictionary*, published in 1996.

13.4 Reports and other publications

African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS)
- *North Darfur, Deep concern over the continued violation of the rights of civilians in El Fasher,* 29 July 2025.
- *Report on the human rights situation in Sudan, Darfur & conflict-affected states, August 2025,* 17 September 2025.

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)
- *Report on the virtual joint fact-finding mission on the human rights violations in the Sudan,* 21 October 2025.

Amnesty International
- *"Handcuffed like dangerous criminals", Arbitrary detention and forced returns of Sudanese refugees in Egypt*, June 2024.

Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)
- *The RSF marches on Sennar and West Kordofan,* 12 July 2024.
- *Drone warfare reaches deeper into Sudan as peace talks stall,* 23 August 2024.
- *Artillery shelling and airstrikes surge in Sudan,* 16 September 2024.
- *Two years of war in Sudan, How the SAF is gaining the upper hand,* 15 April 2025.

CARE
- *Conflict, agriculture, and women in Sudan, Research brief,* 4 September 2025.

Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR)
- *Every day bombs, hunger, and loss of life, Accounts of forgotten victims in North Darfur,* September 2025.

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, October 2019.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Libya*, February 2023
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, May 2024.
- *Thematic Country of Origin Information Report on the Russian Federation, Compulsory military service and mobilisation, LGBTIQ+ people, critics and opponents,* February 2025.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, April 2025.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria*, May 2025.

European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)
- *Sudan – Security situation,* February 2025.

Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- *"Khartoum is not safe for women!", Sexual violence against women and girls in Sudan's capital,* July 2024.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)
- *Sudan, IPC Acute food insecurity, September 2025 – May 2026*, published on 3 November 2025.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- *Sudan crisis regional response, Situation update,* April 2025.
- *Focused flash alert, Al Fasher, North Darfur,* 5 October 2025.
- *Sudan Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA), August 2025,* 23 October 2025.
- *Focus flash alert, Al Fasher, North Darfur,* 10 November 2025.

International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- *2025 Emergency Watchlist, A world out of balance,* 11 December 2024.

Islamic Relief
- *Takaaya, How community kitchens offer a local lifeline to Sudan's hunger crisis,* November 2025.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders, MSF)
- *Besieged, attacked, starved, Mass atrocities in El Fasher and Zamzam, Sudan,* 3 July 2025.

Mixed Migration Centre (MMC)
- *Where to next?, Eritrean displacement amidst shrinking spaces of refuge,* April 2025.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- *Safe, but not surviving, Sudan's urban refugees in Uganda,* June 2025.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- *Sudan, Cholera operational update,* 3 July 2025.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- *Don't ask about him', Detention facilities and practices in Khartoum State in the context of the conflict in the Sudan,* 6 March 2025.
- *Human rights situation in the Sudan, 1 January to 30 June 2025,* 19 September 2025.

Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (RWCHR)
- *A war on children, A world complicit, Legal analysis of atrocities against children in Sudan,* October 2025.

Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
- *Gezira State and the forgotten atrocities, A report on conflict-related sexual violence,* June 2024.
- *Unseen and unheard, The plight of missing women and girls amidst Sudan's crisis,* 25 February 2025.

Sudan Human Rights Hub (SHRH)
- *Sudan's shadow prisons, Captivity, torture, and enforced disappearance,* May 2025, last updated on 17 July 2025.

Sudan Research Group
- *War-time mortality in Sudan, A capture-recapture analysis,* 13 November 2024.

Sudanese American Physicians Association (SAPA) and the Yale School of Public Health
- *Widespread damage to healthcare facilities in Khartoum State, Sudan,* 10 December 2024.

Sudanese Ministry of the Interior
- *The Asylum (Organization) Act,* enacted in 2014.

The Continent
- *The war about everything in Sudan,* 16 August 2025.

The Sentry
- *Sudan mercenaries linked to business partner of top UAE bureaucrat,* November 2025.
- *Inside job, Libya's fuel smuggling escalation,* November 2025.

UN Human Rights Council
- *Sudan, A war of atrocities, Report of the independent international Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan,* 5 September 2025.

UN Security Council (UNSC)
- *Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan,* 15 January 2024.
- *Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) concerning Libya,* 13 December 2024.
- *Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan,* 17 April 2025.

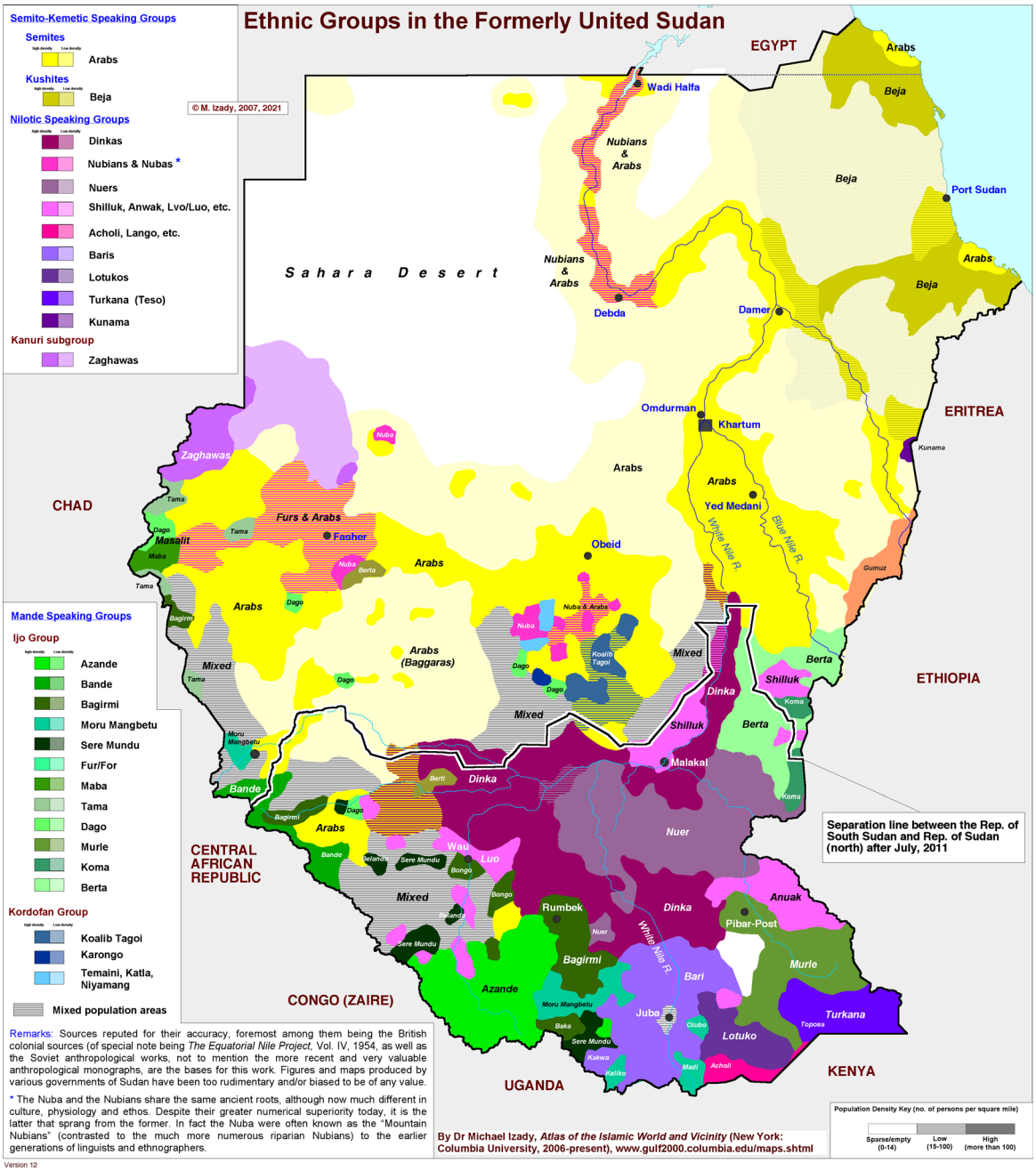
World Economic Forum (WEF)
- *Global gender gap report 2025, Insight report,* June 2025.

World Food Programme (WFP)
- *Operationalising the HDP Nexus in WFP Western Africa, Case study: Chad,* August 2024.

Yale School of Public Health
- *Fourteen arson attacks on villages, North Darfur, 2-12 October 2024,* published on 16 October 2024.
- *Twenty-six arson attacks on villages in Kutum Locality, North Darfur, 12 October – 6 November 2024,* published on 7 November 2024.
- *RSF alleged massacre at Shag Alnom, Multidirectional attacks on El-Obeid,* 18 July 2025.
- *Emergency alert, RSF massacre in Abu Shouk IDP Camp corroborated,* 11 August 2025.
- *Human security incident, Confirmed bombardment at Naivasha Market in Abu Shouk IDP Camp,* 18 August 2025.
- *Human security alert, RSF wall-in El-Fasher's population to prevent escape,* 28 August 2025.
- *13 long-range suicide drones and launch platforms near Nyala Airport, May 2025,* 12 September 2025.
- *Special report, El-Fasher falling, RSF controls Abu Shouk IDP camp,* 18 September 2025.
- *Residents of El-Fasher attempting to escape as RSF attacks continue,* 26 September 2025.
- *Special report, RSF intentionally targeting civilian shelters in El-Fasher,* 14 October 2025.
- *Human security emergency, El-Fasher falls to RSF, Evidence of mass killing,* 27 October 2025.
- *Human security emergency, Day two of RSF control, Mass killings continue in El-Fasher,* 28 October 2025.

14 Maps

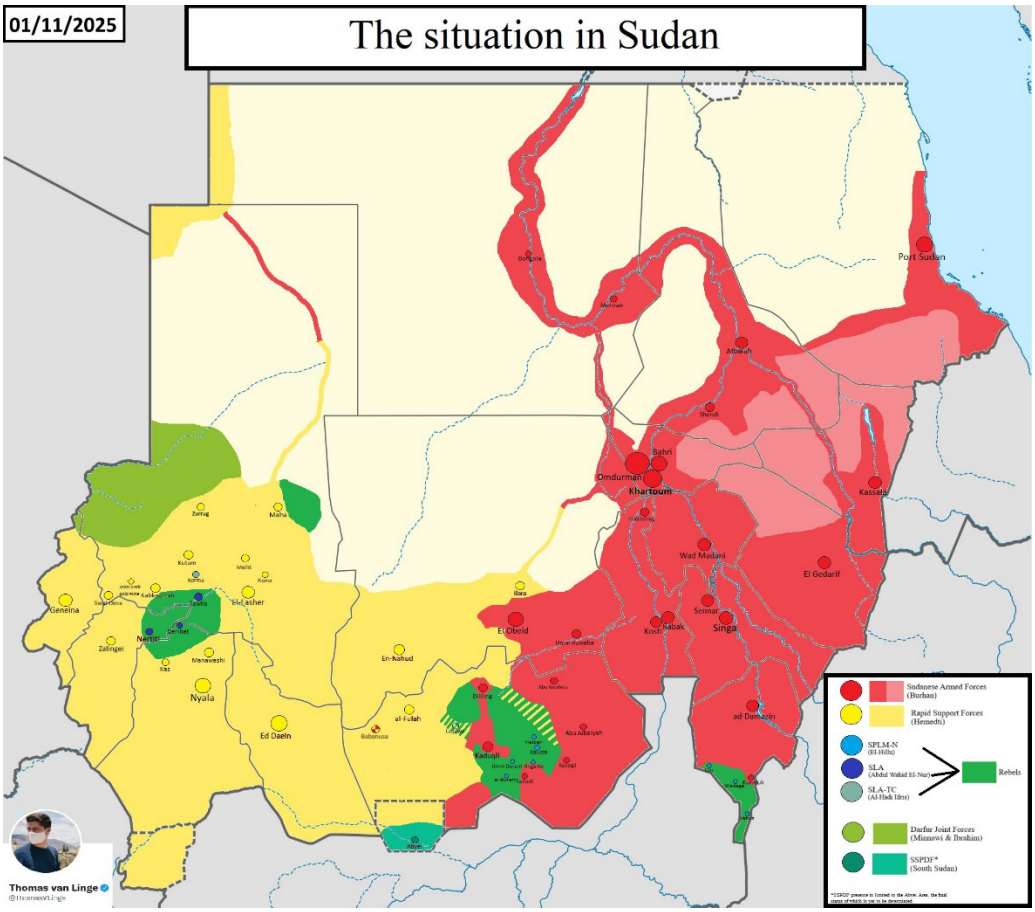
14.1 Ethnolinguistic map of Sudan and South Sudan



This map has been included in this Country of Origin Information Report with the permission of its creator.[1078] It shows the ethnolinguistic diversity of Sudan and South Sudan. The boundaries, names and signs on the map in no way imply formal acceptance or recognition thereof by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

[1078] Dr. M. Izady, Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity (New York, Columbia University, 2006-present), @gulf2000.columbia.edu/maps.shtml

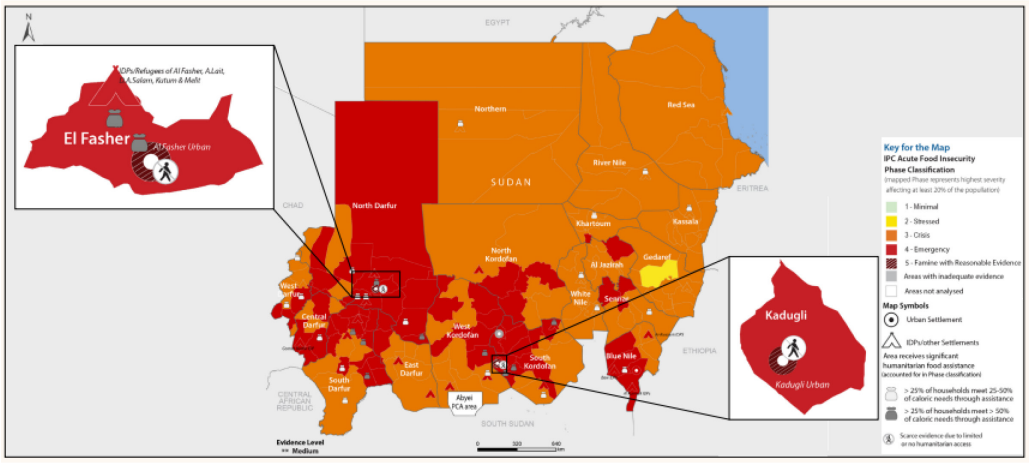
14.2 Overview map of areas of control in Sudan (1 November 2025)



This map has been included in this Country of Origin Information (COI) Report with the permission of its creator.[1079] Compared with the map in the preceding COI Report,[1080] the situation on 1 November 2025 was broadly speaking unchanged. The SAF (shown in red) controlled the north, centre and east of the country, while the RSF (shown in yellow) primarily had the west and south of Sudan under their control. During the reporting period, the SAF recaptured the centre of the country from the RSF. In Darfur, the RSF expanded their area of control at the expense of the SAF and the Joint Force. The SLA/AW retained their area of control in the Jebel Marra mountains in the centre of Darfur and the SPLM-N controlled the Nuba mountains in South Kordofan. Kordofan was fiercely contested by the warring parties. The pale-yellow part consists largely of rugged desert terrain and is uninhabited. The warring parties had not occupied positions in this area. The light red/pink area is uninhabited, but was fully under the control of the SAF and had a small SAF presence.[1081] The boundaries, names and signs on the map in no way imply formal acceptance or recognition thereof by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

[1079] The cartographer in question is called Thomas van Linge. He is a conflict reporter and conflict researcher. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 112.
[1080] Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan,* May 2024, p. 112.
[1081] Confidential source, 10 August 2025.

14.3 Overview map of food insecurity in Sudan (September 2025)[1082]



The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which is the international food monitor of the UN, classifies food crises according to different categories, including 'stress' (yellow), 'crisis' (orange), 'emergency' (red) and 'catastrophe/famine' (dark red). At the time of writing, most of Sudan was in a food crisis (orange). In some parts of the country there was an emergency situation (red), in particular in Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile. In El Fasher (North Darfur) and Kadugli (South Kordofan), there was famine (dark red). This map has been included in this COI Report with the permission of the IPC. The boundaries, names and signs on the map in no way imply formal acceptance or recognition thereof by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

[1082] IPC, *Sudan, IPC Acute food insecurity,* published on 3 November 2025, p. 1.