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1.1.3. Territorial control

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Map 2. Sudan Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 August 2026, Political Geography Now. Circle size indicates the population size of the location, based on estimated population figures. 116

Towards August 2026, the situation regarding territorial control was marked by a divide between western and eastern Sudan.117 Of the country's total 18 states, the RSF controlled the five Darfur states (North, South, East, West and Central Darfur), although with some local exceptions, as parts of North Darfur either remained under SAF control118 or were contested between the RSF and SAF, alongside parts of West Darfur.119 The SLM-AW maintained its area of control in the Jebel Marra mountains in the centre of Darfur in the common border area between North, South and Central Darfur.120

Moreover, the RSF controlled sizeable territories in the Kordofan region,121 including all of West Kordofan and parts of North Kordofan and South Kordofan. Some areas of western and southeastern South Kordofan were contested between the two main warring parties122 or under the control of SPLM-N,123 which held the Nuba mountains.124

In Blue Nile state, southern areas bordering South Sudan and Ethiopia were mapped as either contested125 or controlled by the RSF and its allied forces associated with the Taasis coalition. 126 In the Northern state, since June 2025,127 the RSF has been in control of a small stretch of territory along Sudan's border triangle with Libya and Egypt128 (the strategic El Uweinat area); 129 control further extended into the northern edges of North Darfur.130

The SAF and their allied militias, meanwhile, controlled most of the territory of the 13 states outside Darfur, including the country's capital Khartoum131 and the eastern, central and northern states,132 as well as large areas in the south and south-east.133 This was notably the result of the SAF's military advances that led to their recapture of Wad Madani in Al Jazirah state (January 2025) and of Khartoum state in May 2025 and further allowed the SAF to retake territory from the RSF in White Nile, North and South Kordofan states.134 Following the offensive conducted July 2026, the SAF further expanded its control within North Kordofan.135

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