Please cite as: EUAA, '2.7.1. Actors involved and territorial control' in *Sudan: Security Situation*, October 2026.

2.7.1. Actors involved and territorial control

During the reference period, the SAF controlled the eastern edges of North Kordofan bordering White Nile and Khartoum states as well as the area stretching along the southern road connecting Kosti in White Nile state to the North Kordofan's capital El Obeid.821 Towns along this stretch of road towards Kosti like Umm Ruwaba, Rahad Abu Dakna and Wad Ashana were under SAF control.822 El Obeid served as a stronghold for the SAF, with their 5th Infantry Division ('Camel Corps') stationed there.823 In its areas of control in North Kordofan, the SAF were supported in its offensives by the allied Joint Forces,824 having formed a joint battalion named Al-Sayyad (Hunter825) Forces.826 Further support was reportedly provided by the Sudan Shield Forces (SSF) under their commander Abu Aqla Keikel,827 who had previously fought with the RSF in Al Jazirah before switching sides to join the SAF.828 As of July 2026, the SAF-allied groups Sudanese Popular Resistance Forces (Mustanfareen) and the Islamist Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigade also reportedly had a presence in the state.829

Meanwhile, the RSF controlled vast areas of the state,830 namely north and west of El Obeid. 831 In June 2026, the RSF closed in on El Obeid, a major commercial hub serving as a gateway to Darfur, Kordofan, and central Sudan, which has remained under SAF control since the start of the war in April 2023.832 On account of the reported RSF military reinforcements around El Obeid, the UN Security Council in June 2026 warned of a potential ground offensive on the city. 833

- 821

  Sudans Post, Territorial Control Map – Sudan Conflict (as of June 21, 2026) [Map 1], 22 June 2026, url; Sudans Post, Territorial control map – Sudan Conflict (as of May 10, 2026) [Map], 10 May 2026, url; Sudans Post, Territorial control in Sudan – October 2025 [Map 2], 12 October 2025, url; Soliman, A. and Baldo, S., Gold and the war in Sudan [Map], Chatham House, updated 24 March 2026, url

- 822

  Ayin Network, Analysis: Sudan's Kordofan War, the fiercest front lines, 28 November 2025, url

- 823

Sudan War Monitor, Fears of Looming Attack on El Obeid as RSF Build-Up Continues, 21 June 2026, url

- 824

  Sudan Tribune, Sudanese army retakes strategic town in North Kordofan, 5 March 2026, url

- 825

  Sudan Tribune, Sudan joint force says it retook West Kordofan town from RSF after fierce battle, 14 May 2025, url

- 826

  Ayin Network et al., Sudan Conflict Monitor # 19, 28 April 2025, url, p. 6; Ayin Network et al., Sudan Conflict Monitor # 18, 7 March 2025, url, p. 4

- 827

  Dabanga, Battles rage in Sudan's North Kordofan with both sides claiming victory, 19 November 2025, url

- 828

  Ayin Network et al., Sudan Conflict Monitor # 22, 21 August 2025, url, p. 5

- 829

  Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Mapping the Armed Actors in the Sudan Conflict [Map], 7 July 2026, url

- 830

  Sudan Tribune, Sudanese paramilitary forces mass near El Obeid ahead of expected assault, 15 June 2026, url

- 831

  Sudans Post, Territorial control map – Sudan Conflict (as of May 10, 2026) [Map], 10 May 2026, url; Sudans Post, Territorial control in Sudan – October 2025 [Map 2], 12 October 2025, url

- 832

  Sudan War Monitor, Fears of Looming Attack on El Obeid as RSF Build-Up Continues, 21 June 2026, url

- 833

  UN News, Sudan: Security Council warns of mass atrocity risk in El Obeid, 20 June 2026, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu