Please cite as: EUAA, '2.9.1. Actors involved and territorial control' in *Sudan: Security Situation*, October 2026.

2.9.1. Actors involved and territorial control

At the beginning of the reference period, the SAF only had limited presence in West Kordofan in the garrison towns of Al Nuhud and Babanusa[948] as well as in Heglig oil field.[949] As of November 2025, Babanusa was the headquarters of the SAF 22nd Division while the SAF 90th Brigade was stationed in Heglig.[950] A map provided by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies showed West Kordofan state almost entirely under control of the RSF together with an array of regional and tribal militias as of the start of July 2026.[951] The RSF had a reported advantage in the state, as it drew most of its fighters there from the local ethnic group Misseriya,[952] the largest tribe in the state.[953] In the eastern parts of West Kordofan, the RSF were reportedly cooperating with the SPLM-N-Al-Hilu.[954]

The oil-rich Abyei region is claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan.[955] The region continued to have a presence of armed actors, despite a commitment by both governments to maintain Abyei as a demilitarised area.[956] Between 16 April and 1 October 2025, an increased presence of RSF in northern Abyei was reported,[957] which continued into the first half of 2026.[958] The RSF reportedly utilised its forces drawn from Misseriya nomads from West Kordofan with grazing rights in Abyei to infiltrate the Abyei area under the guise of nomadic migration.[959] In the southern part of Abyei, there was a presence of South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and South Sudan National Police Service personnel.[960] The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) as of April 2026 had 2 762 military and 52 police personnel deployed in the region.[961]

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