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2.13.1. Actors involved and territorial control

During the reference period, the SAF controlled the larger northern part of Blue Nile state with its state capital Damazin. Meanwhile, the SPLM-N-Al-Hilu controlled the southern tip of the state, 1108 the Funj region with over a half million inhabitants.1109 It was described as 'one of the dominant forces' in Blue Nile state1110 with its stronghold in Yabousa (Yabous) in the Al-Kurmuk district.1111 Following the formation of the Taasis alliance in February 2025 (see section 1.1.1. Political developments), the RSF, having no historic presence in Blue Nile state, subsequently moved troops and equipment into territory held by the SPLM-N-Al-Hilu.1112

Starting in mid-December 2025, both SAF and RSF together with their respective allied forces started mobilising troops in Blue Nile, amid accusations by the SAF that neighbouring Ethiopia was supporting the RSF by allowing them to use its territory for training camps and as a military supply line.1113 A Reuters investigation in February 2026 found evidence of a training camp in Ethiopia close to the border with Blue Nile state, reportedly housing over 4 000 RSF fighters. According to the investigation, this was the first evidence of direct involvement of Ethiopia in the war in Sudan, potentially providing the RSF with a supply base for fighting in the south of the country.1114

According to Sudan War Monitor, the RSF and SPLM-N-Al-Hilu maintained distinct command structures, but cooperated tactically in their offensive against the SAF.1115 As of mid-August 2026, the Taasis alliance controlled the southern tip of the state, namely parts of Al-Kurmuk and Baw districts, reaching towards the southern edges of the towns Kurmuk and Sirkum, while simultaneously having opened a new front in Geisan district from across the border in Ethiopia. 1116

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