

# AL-FASHER CONFLICT: UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS

Sara Tria, Indus Hutton Mackay, Elena Courbe, Klara Emma  
Sengespeick, Nathaniel Bartholomew



# Sudans Modern Political History



## 1989-2019

- 30-year dictatorship by Omar al-Basir
- Mass protests in Sudan
- April 2019, the military removed al-Bashir
- Transitional Military Council took power
- August 2019 – A power-sharing government formed between civilians and the military (the “Sovereign Council”).

## 2019-2021

- Transition aims to lead to elections and democratic governance within three years.
- October 2021 – Military coup by the National Army dissolves the civilian government.
- Supporter by the RSF

## 2021-2023

- Return to military rule
- Shared power between SAF and RSF
- Each controlling separate forces and economic networks.
- Tensions over integrating RSF into the army led to open conflict on April 15, 2023.

## 2023-Now

.....



**RSF**

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo) a militia armed by the government during the Darfur conflict in the early 2000s,

**SAF**

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan ) represent the official national military,

# Sudans Modern Political History



## 1989-2019

- 30-year dictatorship by Omar al-Basir
- Mass protests in Sudan
- April 2019, the military removed al-Bashir
- Transitional Military Council took power
- August 2019 – A power-sharing government formed between civilians and the military (the “Sovereign Council”).

## 2019-2021

- Transition aims to lead to elections and democratic governance within three years.
- October 2021 – Military coup by the National Army dissolves the civilian government.
- Supporter by the RSF

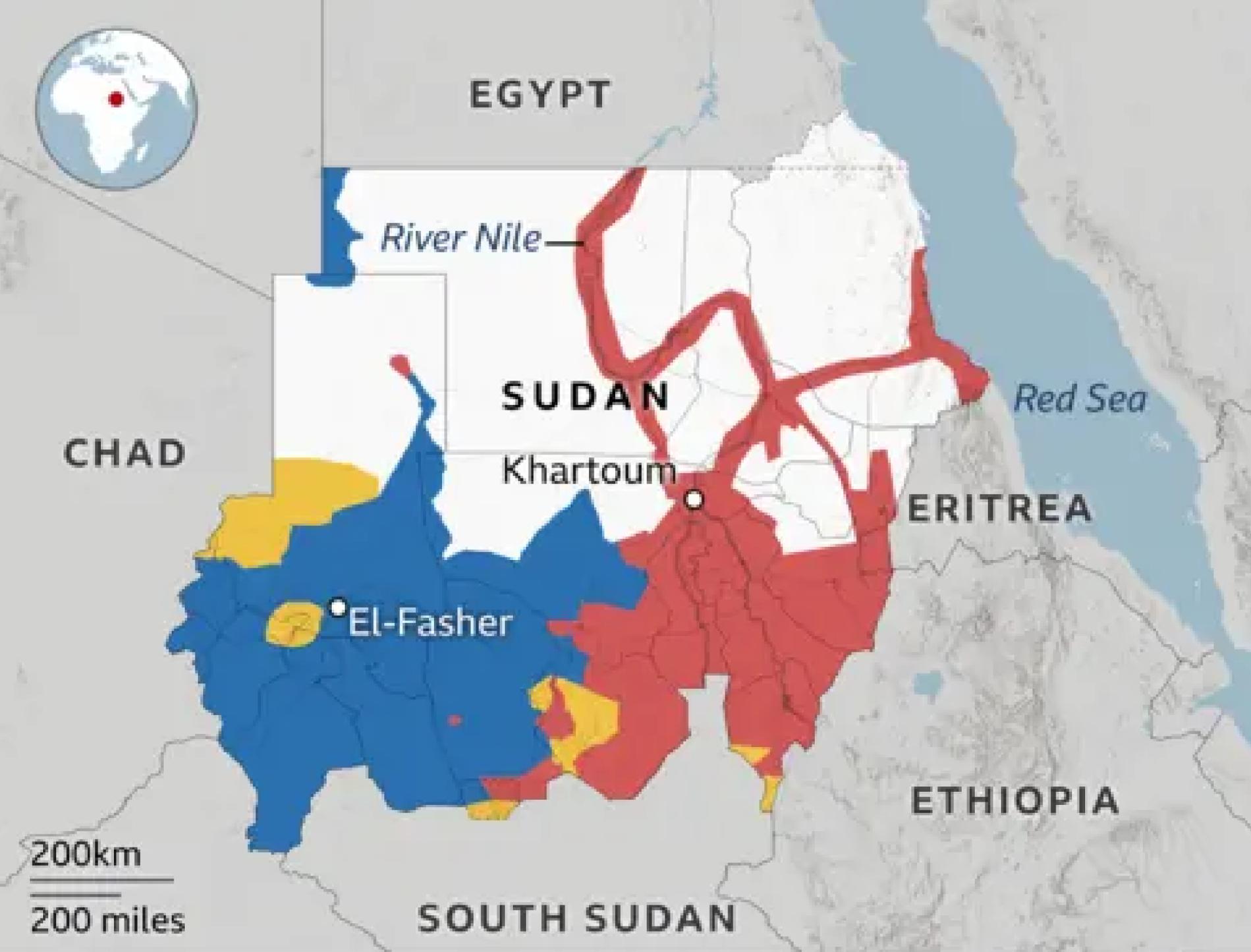
## 2021-2023

- Return to military rule
- Shared power between SAF and RSF
- Each controlling separate forces and economic networks.
- Tensions over integrating RSF into the army led to open conflict on April 15, 2023.

## 2023-Now

.....

# Current Territorial Control

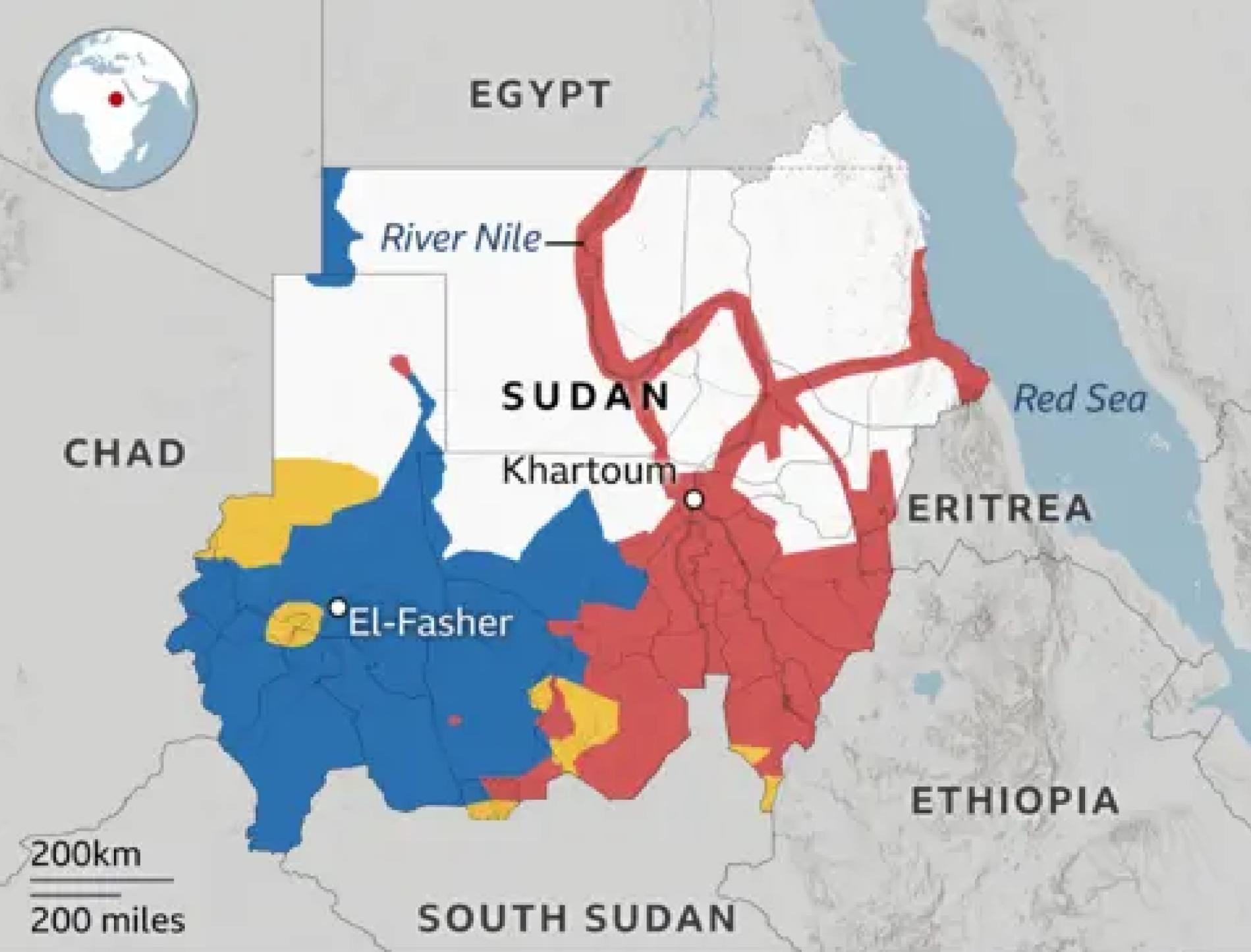


■ Army / allied groups   ■ RSF / allied groups   ■ Other armed groups

Source: Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute (28 Oct 2025)



# Why El-Fasher matters



■ Army / allied groups   ■ RSF / allied groups   ■ Other armed groups

# The fall of El-Fasher

## October 2025

In October 2025, the RSF captured El-Fasher, the last SAF stronghold in Darfur, gaining full control of the region.

Months of fierce fighting devastated the city, causing thousands of civilian deaths and mass displacement.

## Symbolical Importance

Symbolically, it represents the total collapse of governmental authority in the region. Survivors' testimonies describe mass killings and the burning of entire neighborhoods.

## Strategical Importance

Strategically the city was a central logistic hub for humanitarian operations in western Sudan and served as a coordination center for NGOs. Its loss has limited humanitarian access to millions of people in Darfur.

## Blockade & Inaction

The RSF established checkpoints throughout the city and surrounding villages, blocking humanitarian operations from entering the area. The international community's response has been limited, with the UN and African Union failing to secure a ceasefire.

# A possible Genocide

The collapse of basic living conditions and the violence against civilians seem to target specific ethnic groups, raising the alarming possibility of genocide, due to the systemic targeting of certain specific non-arab communities: Masalit, Fur, Zaghawa



**Under the UN Genocide Convention of 1948, the felony of genocide can be established when criminals:**

Have perpetrated actions amongst listed acts (killing, creating destructive conditions of life such as preventing birth amongst the protected group, organized famine, etc.)

Show specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a protected group (national, ethnical, racial, or religious)

# Humanitarian disaster



01

## Mass displacement & famine

Millions displaced; famine declared in El-Fasher and Kadugli.

02

## Blocked humanitarian aid

RSF restrictions prevent access to affected areas.

03

## Human rights violations

Reports of ethnic targeting and severe abuses.

04

## Systemic collapse

Health and nutrition systems have broken down, crisis spreading to other regions.



## Quad for Sudan

International response to the crisis through 4 countries: the US, the UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia

# Failed Diplomacy attempt & the role of alliances

The UAE appointed for providing RSF with advanced weapons

The EU and the UK being passively complicit?

# The absence of governance: economic interests captured by those who access power

While the sudanese state is crumbling and none of its institutions are working, armed groups are creating new governance systems which vary depending on the subjected area of the country.

**The gold of Sudan, object of all desires: behind the support to RSF, Dubai is able to monopolize the exports of sudanese gold**

- The absence of control of the country's own natural resources leads to personal monopolization
- The economy is now mainly informal
- The humanitarian aid is the only source of liquidity in the country.



# Possible solutions

## Short run/ immediate

- Humanitarian aid
- Diplomatic efforts towards a ceasefire (Africa Union, UNSC)



## Long-run

### Structural reform:

- strengthen governance and stability: reform security sector - demobilise militia, and bring sector under civilian control
- support economic recovery : rebuild markets, infrastructure and agriculture → reduce reliance on aid and vulnerability to armed groups
- reconnect regional stability
- seek justice: document abuses, establish mechanisms for investigating serious war crimes (ICC prosecutions?)

# Conclusion

- Civil war between Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces
- in late 2025, RSF seizes El-Fasher, the last SAF stronghold in Darfur, signalling the regime's collapse in the region
- This has caused a humanitarian disaster- famine, mass displacement and reports of ethnic killings of the Masalit, Fur and Zaghawa communities- prompting UN warnings of possible genocide
- Over 150,000 people have died, and 12 million people are displaced
- International peace efforts have failed
- the UAE'S alleged support of the RSF via Sudan's gold trade fuels the conflict
- Aid is currently blocked, governance is broken and Sudan faces state collapse
- Restoring peace will require urgent humanitarian access, ceasefire, and long-term reforms



**Thank you for listening**