

## The RSF's resurgence: Has Sudan's war entered a new phase?



The situation in Sudan is moving toward greater complexity and suffering, after observers had thought things might be heading toward a possible de-escalation, especially after the Sudanese army managed to regain control of key positions in Khartoum and its surroundings. But that perception quickly faded with the Rapid Support Forces militia's sudden reactivation of its field presence, reshuffling the cards and opening new fronts in a scene many had believed was beginning to recede.

In recent weeks, the RSF militia has intensified its drone attacks in several areas in an attempt to reassert itself as a force capable of taking the initiative and disrupting the Sudanese army's calculations. These attacks reflect a shift in the nature of the confrontation, from direct clashes to systematic attrition targeting civilian infrastructure and the foundations of daily life, through a policy akin to scorched earth that leaves residents deprived of even the minimum levels of security, services, and stability.

The return of waves of displacement, both internal and cross-border, has been one of the most prominent consequences of this escalation, as though the war were returning once again to square one. Millions of Sudanese now find themselves trapped between two bitter choices: either remain in areas threatened by death, shelling, and the collapse of basic services, or flee into the

unknown, with all the suffering, loss, and insecurity that entails.

Thus, the latest escalation does not appear to be merely a battlefield shift, but rather a sign of a broader humanitarian catastrophe that could worsen unless the machinery of war is stopped.

### The return of escalation and the RSF militia's resurgence

Since late March, the Rapid Support Forces militia has returned to the battlefield at a more intense pace, after a series of defeats at the hands of the Sudanese army, during which the latter managed to retake dozens of areas that had been under the control of Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, and his forces. What is striking about this return, however, is that it has come with greater ferocity than in earlier phases, reflecting a clear attempt by the RSF to compensate for its battlefield losses and reimpose itself as a force capable of taking the initiative and disrupting the army's calculations.

In its recent operations, the RSF militia has relied primarily on drones, which have given it a greater ability to carry out effective strikes at lower cost and without engaging in broad direct confrontations with the army confrontations that generally tilt in favor of the Sudanese Armed Forces. Through this weapon, the militia has succeeded in regaining a measure of battlefield presence, inflicting losses on the army, and reshuffling the battle once again through a combat pattern based on attrition and long-range strikes rather than conventional engagement.

Over the past few days, Kordofan state has witnessed a violent military escalation by the RSF, after two drone strikes killed about 67 people by targeting shelter areas and displacement camps in the village of Kadam to the west and the village of Al-Marra to the north. These attacks reflect the danger of escalation spreading to areas that are supposed to serve as refuges for civilians fleeing the fighting, turning displacement itself into a new circle of danger that offers neither protection nor safety.

The city of El-Obeid, in the center of North Kordofan state, has also come under a series of systematic attacks, despite being an important hub for sheltering displaced people and hosting a base for managing army operations in the region. The city has become an open arena for drone strikes targeting markets, power stations, health facilities, and residential neighborhoods, in a scene that reflects a systematic attempt to destroy the foundations of daily life, drive residents into further displacement and suffering, and reproduce the humanitarian catastrophe in the heart of Kordofan.

### The UAE's role in fueling the situation

The return of Hemedti's militia to military escalation, after the losses it has sustained in recent months, cannot be understood in isolation from the network of regional support provided to it, foremost among them support from the United Arab Emirates, as Abu Dhabi seeks to restore its presence inside the Sudanese arena and expand its influence in one of the region's most sensitive theaters. Sudan — with its geostrategic location, wealth, and avenues of influence on the Red Sea and in the Horn of Africa — has become part of a broader equation in which the UAE is moving to repair its regional influence after the blows it has suffered in other files, chief among them Yemen.

Recent regional developments, foremost among them the US-Israeli war against Iran, have revealed the limits of the Emirati role and the state of relative isolation Abu Dhabi is experiencing within some Arab decision-making circles, especially with the expansion of the Saudi role and Riyadh's pulling away part of the carpet of influence in Yemen and within the Gulf Cooperation Council.

تم تدمير السودان بسبب الإمارات: كيف كشفت الأدلة الميدانية وشهادات المسؤولين مسار تسليح مليشيا الدعم السريع (الجنجويد) وتصعيد الحرب

في تقرير نشرته صحيفه ذا ستاندرد للكاتب أوليفر بول، يُعرض سرد تفصيلي لتطورات الحرب في السودان، مع تركيز خاص على الدور الذي لعبته الإمدادات العسكرية...  
[pic.twitter.com/48ETg1pqk8](https://pic.twitter.com/48ETg1pqk8)

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In this context, the UAE has moved to widen its room for maneuver outside the traditional Arab consensus through a sharply pragmatic approach, the indicators of which have appeared in deepening cooperation with Israel on several files, such as Somaliland and the Horn of Africa, alongside support for its proxies and allies in open conflict arenas such as Sudan and Libya.

From this perspective, the RSF's current resurgence — after many estimates had suggested the war was nearing its end with the militia's battlefield retreat — appears to be part of a broader shift in the UAE's regional policy. The matter is not merely about trying to save a local ally from collapse, but about reestablishing a foothold in Sudan within an intertwined regional struggle for influence, in which Abu Dhabi is acting according to calculations of interest and power, far removed from any Arab, Islamic, or humanitarian consideration — a struggle whose price is being paid by millions of Sudanese people.

The return of displacement waves once again

It appears that the displacement of about 13 million Sudanese people, and the pushing of more than 30 million others to the brink of needing humanitarian aid since the war broke out in April 2023, was not enough to awaken the conscience

of the warring parties or stop the country's bleeding. Today, the situation is heading toward new, more tragic waves of displacement, after displacement itself has shifted from an emergency condition into a continuous daily movement across a changing map, wavering between fear, hunger, killing, and insecurity.

With the strategy the RSF is pursuing in targeting the foundations of life in the areas hit by its operations, waves of displacement are accelerating at a brutal pace. Sudanese families are now fleeing from villages to cities, from cities to their outskirts, and then to remote areas, before finding themselves forced to cross borders in search of temporary refuge. In this way, displacement becomes an open-ended journey for a people who have not known calm for years, and who scarcely escape one front before another begins to pursue them.

According to field estimates, Kordofan state has witnessed unprecedented waves of displacement over the past few months, reaching about 132,000 displaced people in just four months, between late October 2025 and February 2026, amid indications that these waves are continuing to this day. These figures reflect the scale of the humanitarian collapse in the region, especially as shelter areas and displacement camps themselves have become potential targets for shelling and attacks.

The humanitarian catastrophe is deepening day after day. Every drone strike means dozens of new families on the road to displacement, and everyone who decides to stay is gambling with their life and safety in a reality open to death, hunger, and the collapse of services. This has been reflected in Sudanese society, which has become more fractured than ever before after the war struck at the basic foundations of its survival — agriculture, industry, and markets — and destroyed the pillars of recovery, including health care, education, and social protection networks.

In the end, all these indicators are pushing Sudan backward once again: intense military escalation, brutal waves of displacement, foreign interventions manipulating the scene, and scandalous international silence met by predictable Arab disengagement, while the global media remains preoccupied with other war zones.

In the midst of this absence, Sudanese people face an uncertain future, between a state threatened with fragmentation and disappearance from the map of stability, a people facing the danger of slow extermination, and an Arab and international community content to watch from the sidelines.