

Sudanese Armed Forces Retake Central Khartoum in Ongoing Battle for Political Legitimacy

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Key Developments

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) fully retook central Khartoum on March 26 and are clearing the last pockets of Rapid Support Forces (RSF) resistance from the greater Khartoum area, marking a major military and political victory for the SAF.

What is Next?

• SAF Clearing in Khartoum

The SAF has encircled the remaining RSF elements in southwestern Khartoum, where hundreds of RSF fighters are retreating into White Nile state across the Jebel Awliya Bridge—the RSF’s only exit out of the city.

• SAF Advances in Omdurman

The SAF has advanced in Omdurman—Khartoum’s twin city on the west bank of the Nile—over the past week, where the RSF has used its positions to shell and conduct drone strikes against the SAF in the greater capital area since the beginning of the civil war.

Implications

• More Military Advances

The capture of Khartoum is a military victory that gives the SAF control of the eastern bank of the Nile River, which the SAF can use to prepare for future offensives against the RSF center of gravity in western Sudan.

• Political Legitimacy

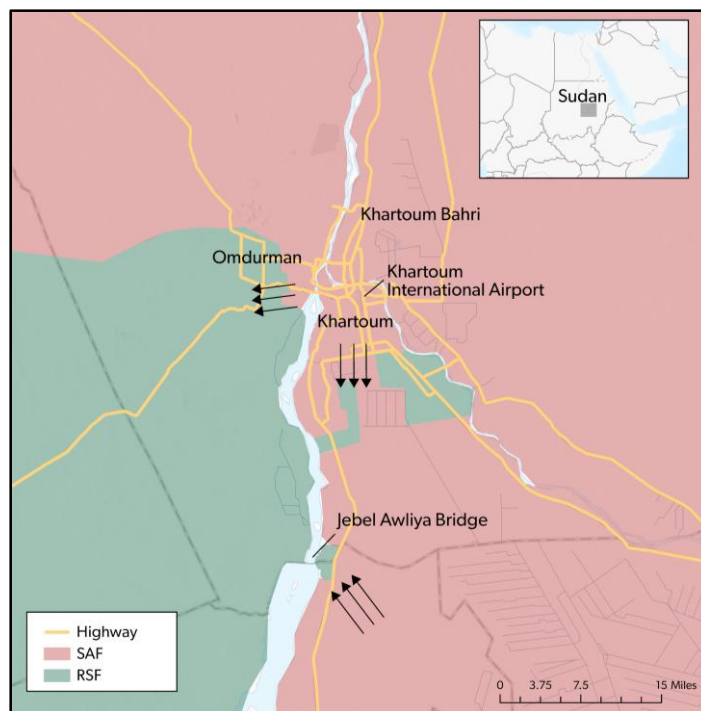
SAF control over Khartoum bolsters the SAF political claim to be the only legitimate ruler in Sudan. SAF leader Abdel Fattah al Burhan said on March 27 that Sudan is preparing for a civilian, technocratic government to take power.

• External Involvement

Russia, Iran, Turkey, and Egypt have sent weapons—including drones—to the SAF that have been critical in fighting in Khartoum, while the United Arab Emirates has provided weapons and drone support to the RSF.

Area of SAF and RSF Operations in Khartoum

As of March 27, 2025



Click map to enlarge. Map created by Kathryn Tyson © Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute; Source: Vista Maps, Thomas van Linge; March 21, 2025 Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri,

Future Outlook

• SAF Advances West

The SAF has advanced westward from positions in central Sudan and recaptured several key state capitals from the RSF since November 2024.

• RSF Doubles Down in Darfur

The RSF has intensified its efforts to defeat the SAF in western Sudan to consolidate control over the western half of the country and enforce a de facto partition.

Objectives

• Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

Reassert political and military control

• Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

Expand influence and challenge the SAF’s dominance in Sudan’s political and military structure.