



Information Manipulation in Sudan

A Baseline Assessment of actors,
narratives and tactics



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The material in this report discusses sensitive and potentially distressing themes, including accounts of violence against civilians, human rights violations, and sexual and gender-based violence in the context of the conflict in Sudan. Reader discretion is advised.

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Glossary

AFP – Agence France-Presse
AI – Artificial Intelligence
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
CIB – Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour
DISARM – Framework for analysing disinformation tactics
ERRs – Emergency Response Rooms
FCDO – Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FIMI – Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference
FM – Frequency Modulation
GBV – Gender-Based Violence
HRD – Human Rights Defender
ICC – International Criminal Court
KII – Key Informant Interview
MENA – Middle East and North Africa
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
OSINT – Open-Source Intelligence
RSF – Rapid Support Forces
SAF – Sudanese Armed Forces
SGBV – Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SJS – Sudanese Journalists Syndicate
TTP – Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
UAE – United Arab Emirates
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations

1. Introduction

Since April 2023, the war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has been systematically destroying Sudan and its people.

It is a violent and destructive war which is being fought between two military factions in the previous government formed out of a coup in October 2021. Additional involvement and support from geopolitical actors is resulting in one of the fastest unfolding humanitarian crises of all time. Poverty, famine, and disease are devastating and rife.

Sudan's unity is being decimated with distinct geographic, political, and social realities now functioning separately from one another.

The warring parties are effectively partitioning the country into competing zones of authority. SAF dominates the eastern, northern, and central regions, including Port Sudan and now Khartoum which was captured by SAF in May 2025. RSF now commands much of Kordofan and Darfur with its territorial entrenchment further consolidated when it captured El Fasher in late October 2025.

The human cost has been catastrophic. By the end of October 2025, the **United Nations reported** that

over 30 million of Sudan's 45 million population required urgent humanitarian assistance, with over 15 million of those being children and 9.6 million displaced.

Poverty, famine, and disease are now widespread and worsening to the point where **both international and community-led support initiatives are no longer able to function**, particularly in North and East Darfur.

Both warring parties have committed serious violations against civilians, with the RSF documented engaging in mass atrocities including systematic rape and sexual violence, targeted killings, and ethnic cleansing campaigns, particularly in Darfur and **most recently in El Fasher**, whilst SAF forces have also targeted civilian infrastructure and populations.

The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan's **latest report** finds both parties responsible for deliberately targeting civilians including in crimes against humanity.

Beyond territory, the conflict has deliberately instrumentalised and intensified social divisions that transcend geographic boundaries.





Both armed factions have actively promoted hate speech and exploited tribal, regional, and racial animosities to build constituencies and legitimise atrocities, eroding social cohesion across Sudanese society.

In many instances, these hate speech campaigns have preceded military operations or have been used to build momentum and justification for the continuation of the conflict and continuous death and violence.

The destruction of Sudan's established information infrastructure, at the outset of the conflict in April 2023, has seen Sudanese communities both inside and outside of the country, rely heavily on digital platforms and social media channels, many of which are informal to access necessary information for survival as well as to communicate.

This shift has intersected with increasing systematic information manipulation and disinformation campaigns, led by a range of actors, from the political to unregulated influencers to bots and trolls, all wielding significant influence.

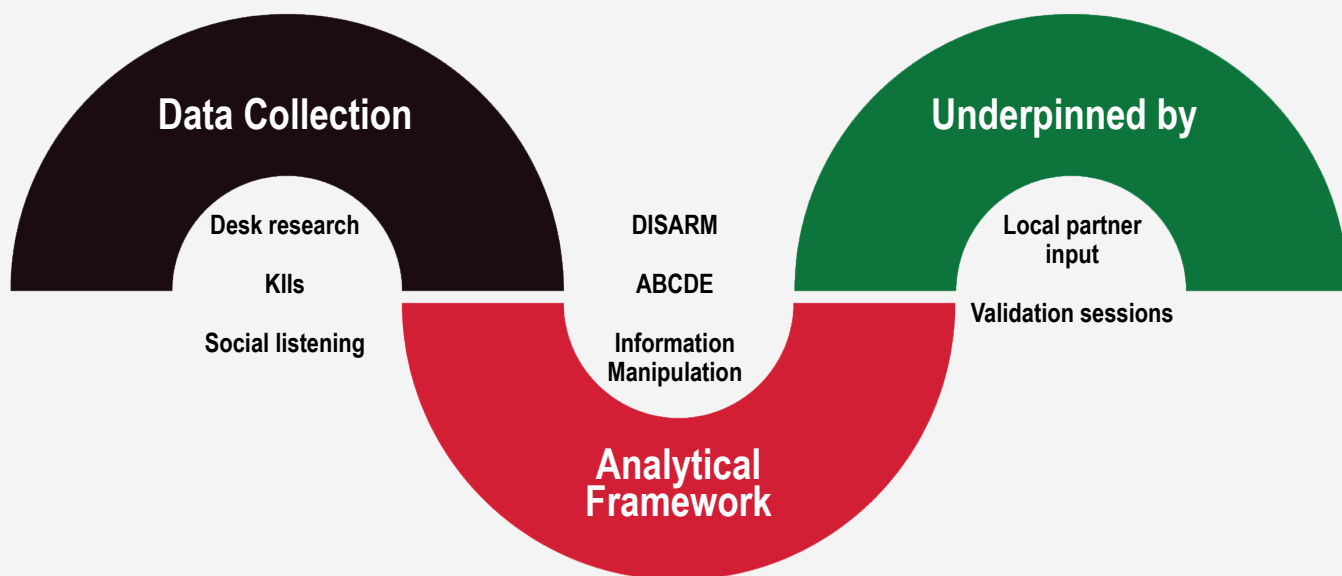
The result is an information environment characterised by alternative 'facts', misleading narratives and information, and hate speech, all of which continue to further entrench divisions, fuel conflict and destroy innumerable lives.

The following report investigates the actors, narratives, tactics, techniques, and procedures underpinning the digital information manipulation and disinformation campaigns currently operating in Sudan's digital spaces.

Employing a mixed methods approach to enable systematic analysis of Sudan's contemporary disinformation ecosystem, the study integrates comprehensive data collection methods which includes a comprehensive literature review, key informant interviews (KIIs), and local partner contributions with a social listening component to provide a real-time assessment of disinformation practices and user behaviours across digital platforms.

This baseline report establishes an understanding of the disinformation landscape from which ongoing monitoring activities can be developed, and be practically applicable for civil society organisations, media outlets, and policymakers working to strengthen Sudan's information integrity.

2. Methodology



The research was structured around two complementary analytical frameworks that offer systematic approaches to examining disinformation operations: the **ABCDE** framework and the **DISARM** framework.

The ABCDE framework disaggregates the disinformation challenge into discrete operational components that can be explored through targeted questions, examining influence operations across five key dimensions:

Actor (which entities are involved?), Behaviour (what activities are being conducted?), Content (what types of material are being produced and circulated?), Degree (how is content distributed and which audiences are being targeted?), and Effect (what are the resulting impacts and who is affected?).

Applying this framework will help to facilitate systematic documentation of Sudan's disinformation ecosystem by establishing a coherent structure for case study analysis and ensure a thorough examination of all operational elements.

The DISARM Red Framework offers a standardised vocabulary for documenting influence operations through detailed taxonomies of Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) deployed by malicious actors, structured around operational objectives such as "Develop Narratives" and "Maximise Exposure," with specific techniques explaining how these objectives are achieved.

DISARM establishes not only the operational sequence necessary to execute disinformation incidents, but also defines the TTPs that describe how each stage can be accomplished.

Together, these frameworks enabled the research to advance beyond descriptive analysis towards actionable intelligence that can inform counter-disinformation strategies, support information sharing amongst organisations, and establish baseline measurements for monitoring the trajectory of Sudan's disinformation landscape.



The integration of ABCDE's systematic deconstruction of influence operations with DISARM's granular behavioural taxonomy ensured the research generated findings that are both methodologically robust and practically applicable.

This overall approach was underpinned by the DIASARM framework definition of disinformation. The **DISARM Framework** defines *disinformation* as: **Information that is deliberately false or misleading and intended to deceive.**

This definition highlights three core elements:

- That information is **false or misleading**.
- That information is shared **deliberately** — there is intent behind its creation and/or distribution
- The **intention is to deceive** the audience.

The DISARM Framework distinguishes disinformation from related concepts like *misinformation* (false or misleading information shared without intent to deceive) and *propaganda* (information advancing a political or ideological agenda).

DISARM positions **information manipulation** in particular as a core component of foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) operations, which include but are not limited to disinformation. This policy paper uses both terms, disinformation and information manipulation, interchangeably throughout.

A mixed methods research approach combining desk and document review, key informant interviews, and social media listening was used to gather the data for this report. This provided comprehensive advantages for studying information manipulation in the complex political environment of Sudan.



3. The Political Landscape



The conflict which erupted on the 15th April 2023 in Sudan shows little sign of coming to any resolution.

It is a violent and destructive civil war which is being fought between two warring parties: SAF and RSF. Death toll estimates are varied with the former U.S. envoy for Sudan advising that up to **400,000 people** have been killed since the conflict began. The same 400,000 figure has been suggested for **people who are now facing starvation**.

By November 2025, the conflict has spread from outside the main areas of Khartoum, Omdurman, Bahri, and Darfur to El Fasher, Bara, the Blue Nile region and Kordofan.

The war has resulted in what is transpiring to be a clear territorial division with the SAF governing the northern regions of Sudan and RSF touting attempts to create a parallel government in the west, with the creation of their **Tasis** coalition of anti-governmental factions.

The two leading antagonists in the conflict - the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) under the authority of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and paramilitary group the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) under the control of General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti - have both been blamed for a range of war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

The RSF atrocities include rape and sexual violence, looting, as well as the targeting, detention, kidnapping and murder of lawyers, journalists, doctors and other local responders.

SAF also continues to target civilians and the destruction of infrastructure is pervasive. Risk of violence, exploitation and abuse from all parties to the conflict are endemic as the conflict continues and worsens.



Both actors in the conflict use their own media, social media platforms, and related influencers to accuse the other side of human rights violations and abuses. In a **speech broadcast on the government controlled Sudan TV** on 25th November 2025, Abdel Fattah al Burhan rejected the US truce plan following talks which were held in the UAE, which was then condemned on a social media account of **Faris El Nur**, an adviser to the RSF government and former negotiator for the group, accusing Burhan of siding with the Islamists for his own personal gain.

The targeting of activists, journalists, aid workers, and local/first responders has increased significantly over the course of the conflict. The SAF has strengthened its attacks against HRDs, journalists and peace activists in areas which fall under its control as well as increased restrictions on movement and supplies to first responders.

RSF continues to arrest and detain activists as well as civilians, loot private and public properties including aid supplies, as well as using sexual violence as means of control in the areas in which they maintain power.

Rape and SGBV have been recorded against non-Arab women and girls as well as against activists documenting human rights abuses, particularly in attacks in El Geneina and El Fasher where violence became ethnically motivated.

Reports of the arming of civilians further speaks to the escalating militarisation of the context. In all cases, where attacks and violence take place, it is **preceded by increased activity, hate speech and information manipulation in the media, social media included**, which further entrenches and legitimises continual violence.

The conflict has triggered an urgent need for protection which includes mental health support, child protection and SGBV and GBV services.

Providing and ensuring the protection of civilians is a key objective of humanitarian action. Sudanese Women Rights Action's 2025 **report** titled "CRSV

in Sudan: Women Bodies as Contested Territory" on conflict-related sexual violence in Sudan documents widespread rape, sexual captivity and severe barriers to accessing post-rape care and psychological support, driven by the destruction of health facilities, deliberate attacks on hospitals and repeated communication shutdowns.

It also highlights that access and availability of such services is now severely limited in Sudan, leaving an entire population vulnerable to long term impacts on their mental and psychosocial health, in particular women and children. Trauma, stress, anxiety, depression, and insomnia are widely experienced forms of emotional abuse in addition to the physical abuse endured by many. This is becoming an increasing concern for journalists and human rights defenders who are working in within this information battleground. Violent images, hate speech and content which is being shared across the information ecosystem are contributing to this overriding crisis.

In a **report** published in May 2025 by The Conflict Sensitivity Facility and titled "Hate Speech in Sudan: A Driver of Conflict and Displacement", evidence showed that warring parties are weaponising digital platforms through hate speech, disinformation and fake news to manipulate public narratives and incite violence.

Journalists, activists and peace advocates are increasingly targeted, including through coordinated inauthentic behaviour, making the information space a high-risk environment for those documenting violations.

People can be harmed physically. People can be harmed mentally because definitely they are not getting the right news for them or are denied information they can base their decisions on so they feel they are hypnotised. They don't know where the truth is. They don't know which part of the news they should believe in.

— **Sudanese OSINT researcher**



A number of **geopolitical players** have played a significant role in influencing the conflict and indeed Sudan's outcomes.

There were initial expectations that Saudi Arabia might use the conflict as a bargaining chip, particularly against the UAE, and it has maintained its stance against any independent mechanisms or sanctions against Sudan and SAF in particular. This resistance is shared by other Arab states, in particular Egypt, whose support to SAF is likely linked to concerns over the security and access to Nile River resources.

This further enables the high levels of impunity which continue to inform the crisis in Sudan.

The UAE has been accused of providing financial and military support to the RSF, with **evidence of Chinese technology and weaponry provided and used in Khartoum and Darfur**.

This geopolitical dynamic directly impacts on the ground, where people continue to suffer.

While international governments and bodies insist on playing political games, the urgent humanitarian crisis in Sudan remains critical and human rights remained highly compromised.

The lack of consensus and the geopolitical manoeuvring at the UN level highlight the complexity and often contradictory nature of international relations, even as people on the ground face dire consequences.

The weaponisation of information has produced devastating real-world consequences beyond battlefield deception.

Coordinated hate speech campaigns systematically precede military offensives, priming civilian populations for violence through dehumanising language and ethnic targeting, a pattern clearly documented before attacks in El-Genaina, El-Fasher, and Al-Halfaya.

Information manipulation directly endangers humanitarian responders and local volunteers with fabricated accusations that emergency rooms collaborate with combatants have led to targeted attacks.

One stakeholder who was interviewed works closely with the Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs) referenced an incident with a drone strike on an emergency relief kitchen that killed six volunteers and three children within 48 hours of a Facebook post by a SAF-affiliated influencer accusing volunteers in Shambat of collaborating with the RSF.

Civil society actors face systematic campaigns to discredit and silence them, with anyone advocating peace branded as a traitor and subjected to doxing, death threats, and contact with family members to restrict their movement.

Women human rights defenders also face particularly vicious targeting, including hacking, image defamation, and sexual threats. This was documented in a **report** released in August 2025 by

The African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), confirming a sharp rise in violations against human rights defenders since the war began, including arbitrary arrests, harassment, surveillance, threats, and defamation through traditional and social media, embedded within an ecosystem that seeks to silence independent voices and dismantle community networks.

The report recorded a hostile environment marked by treason rhetoric, intimidation, and shrinking safety and mobility for activists and humanitarian workers.

The normalisation of hate speech, with ethnic and racial terms becoming everyday slurs denoting political allegiance, combined with infrastructure collapse that leaves Starlink devices controlled by whichever armed group holds territory, has created an information environment where verification is nearly impossible and self-censorship has become pervasive amongst both journalists and ordinary citizens.

Sources interviewed also commented on the critical lack of verification skills and necessary resources among professional and citizen journalists covering the conflict in Sudan which severely comprised their ability to combat the sophisticated disinformation campaigns which continue to dominate the ecosystem.

As one Secretariat within the SJS noted:

The problem is that Sudanese journalists do not possess the capabilities and mechanisms through which to expose disinformation in its time. By the time dissemination of this misleading material in society circles occurs and creates the reaction it creates, we can say polarization on a regional and tribal basis, catastrophic results occurred - that I always say that the hate speech present on social media, the reason for it is the systematic disinformation campaigns carried out by certain parties.

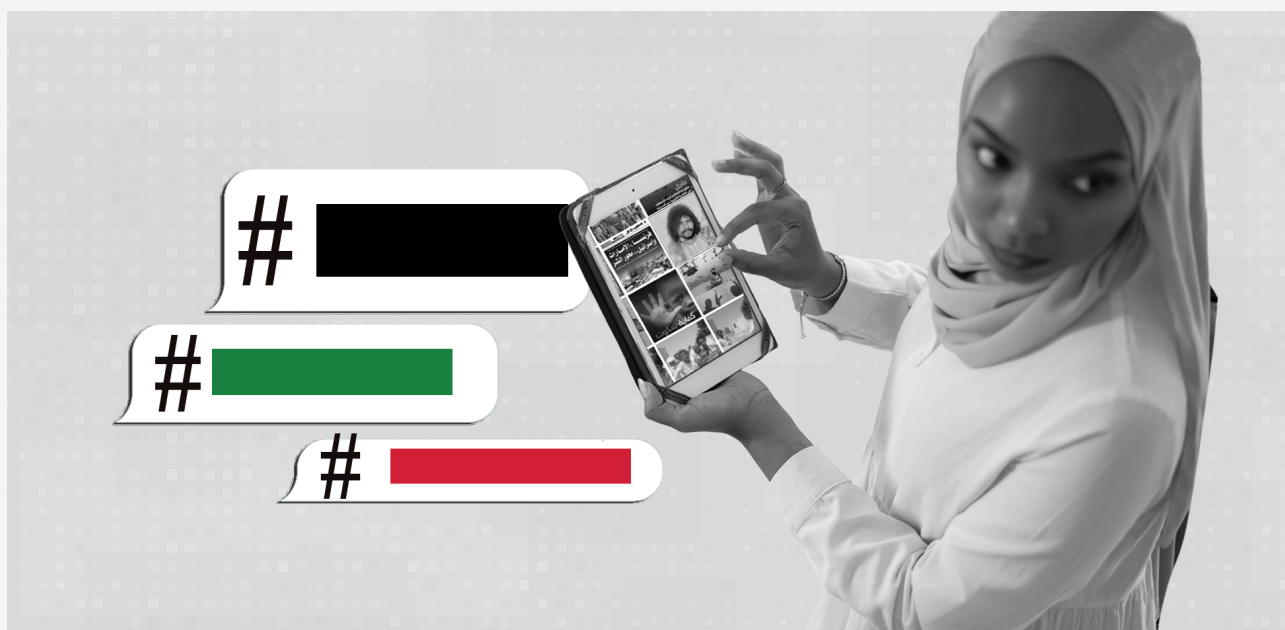
These are the results. Journalists or journalistic institutions don't have systems, or we can say they're not thinking in a way to expose disinformation and have journalists or a department to work in this direction, even though disinformation has become prevalent and social media is being flooded with misleading news."

— Sudan Journalists Syndicate, Member of Secretariat

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4. Media & social media usage in Sudan



Sudan's Media Ecosystem Since April 2023

The war that erupted in April 2023 fundamentally dismantled Sudan's existing media infrastructure, forcing a rapid and chaotic transition to social media-based information systems. This transformation cannot be understood simply as technological adaptation or indeed progression through choice by professional media.

It represents a clear indicator of Sudan's violent political fragmentation, where every aspect of information production, distribution, and consumption now reflects the ongoing war between SAF and RSF.

"What we now know from Sudan and elsewhere, [is] that disinformation, particularly the use of coordinated networks, is part of a toolbox of hybrid warfare."
— **Disinformation expert**

The conflict has not merely disrupted Sudan's media landscape. It has systematically destroyed it. What existed before April 2023 as a fragile but functioning media sector, comprising television stations, radio networks, newspapers, and online news platforms, has largely ceased to operate in any coherent fashion.

Although many **journalists saw a decline in media freedom after the October 2021 coup** which overthrew the transitional government, with safety and security of journalists rapidly decline, the media continued to operate albeit in a restricted manner.

Since April 2023, as one now unemployed journalist in Sudan noted, *"With the launch of the first shot in Sudan's war, all traditional media tools and means truly collapsed."*
— **Sudanese journalist, Al-Gezira state**

Physical infrastructure, including broadcasting equipment, printing presses, offices, has been damaged or rendered inaccessible by the fighting. According to the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate (SJS), 'the buildings of traditional media organs were destroyed, and traditional media equipment was looted'.

This resulted in the abrupt closure and cessation of 21 print newspapers with no printed national newspaper in Sudan since the start of the war; 36 radio stations broadcasting on FM and shortwave; 8 television stations broadcasting via satellite; 13 local television stations broadcasting at the state level according to the SJS.

More significantly, the professional networks that sustained media operations have disintegrated as journalists have fled, organisations have collapsed, and funding has dried up.

Although a minimal number of media have resumed operations inside Sudan, the SJS commented that 80% of journalists have lost their jobs with another nearly 2000 either internally displaced or relocated outside of Sudan.

As a result, journalists often rely on information coming from untrained citizens or citizen journalists who lack knowledge of integrity, transparency, or professionalism, and who can easily pass on unverified material as fact.

This collapse has created an information vacuum that has been filled, not by reconstructed professional media, or even by transnational media systems which continue to produce content on Sudan, but by fundamentally different forms of information sharing. Interviews with media professionals reveals three distinct and competing information ecosystems now operating simultaneously across Sudan.

The first is controlled by the SAF and its allies, the second by the RSF and aligned groups, whilst the third comprises civilian information providers who attempt to operate independently of both warring factions. These ecosystems are platform agnostic, and diverse in their formats and outputs. All are unregulated and unlicensed according to stakeholders.

As one journalist on the ground in Sudan noted:

“This vacuum that happened after the collapse of traditional media institutions, tried to be filled through different traditional digital platforms. Unfortunately, the two warring parties in Sudan were more prepared for this. Just as they were prepared for this war through preparing weapons, the field, and field plans, it seems they prepared a plan for using social media, all platforms, all of them in this war.”

— Sudanese journalist, Al-Gezira state

The physical division of Sudan into territories controlled by different warring factions has also created distinct information spaces with different access patterns and audience relationships.

Citizens in SAF-controlled areas face fundamentally different information environments than those in RSF-held territories, where humanitarian crises, examination disruptions, and marginalisation narratives dominate coverage.

This geographic fragmentation means that even where state media still functions, it has become a propaganda tool for whichever faction controls a given territory, with no pretence of serving a national audience.

“This issue has transformed journalists from being messengers of truth, as they say, into people participating in creating propaganda for the party they belong to. They are publishing information consistent with the political line or the line adopted by the party they belong to without verifying the validity of this information professionally.”

— Member of Sudan Journalists Syndicate (male)

The critical transformation, however, lies in the third ecosystem. There is a decentralised network of individual information providers who have turned to social media platforms to fill the void left by collapsed traditional media.

Active across all three ecosystems are individual information providers producing content for informal digital platforms, including WhatsApp groups, closed Facebook pages, and TikTok broadcasts. These actors operate without institutional backing, editorial oversight, or sustainable funding models, yet they have become the primary source of information for vast segments of the Sudanese population.

“It made social media the main source of information for ordinary Sudanese citizens, and this opened the door to fake news and hate speech.”

— Member of Sudan Journalists Syndicate (male)

The shift to social media is not in addition to professional media production and consumption but a replacement as the primary mechanism for information distribution and access. WhatsApp groups have become crucial channels for sharing news, coordinating humanitarian responses, and maintaining social connections across fragmented territories.

Facebook pages function as improvised news outlets, with individual administrators curating and sharing information without the resources or structures that would enable verification or contextualisation.

TikTok is also now emerging as a significant platform for information sharing, particularly among younger audiences, with short videos providing updates on security situations, humanitarian needs, and political developments.

This evolving information system can respond quickly to changing circumstances and reach audiences that traditional media might miss. However, it is profoundly unstable and vulnerable to manipulation.

There is minimal consistency across these platforms, no shared professional standards, which further exacerbates the issues emerging from limited capacity for fact-checking or verification. The internet remains the primary channel for information dissemination, but access is also unreliable, controlled by warring factions in different territories, and subject to frequent disruption. The fragility of this social media-based ecosystem is further deepened by its vulnerability to coordinated disinformation campaigns.

Without institutional structures to verify information or editorial processes to ensure accuracy, false and manipulated narratives spread very rapidly and are difficult to counter.

The practical implications of this transformation are severe. Multiple, territorially defined information spaces now exist where a singular national conversation once struggled to maintain coherence. These spaces require different editorial

and organisational strategies and approaches, different coverage priorities, and different methods for reaching audiences.

A diverse range of audiences from across the geographies of Sudan now requires tailored content that reflects their specific circumstances, security situations, and information needs.

Geographic fragmentation also creates practical obstacles for any form of coordinated media support. Exiled media operating from neighbouring countries to date have been able to maintain editorial independence from both the SAF and RSF but struggle to gather information from inside Sudan or distribute content to audiences whose primary concerns are immediate survival rather than consuming news meaning they are largely serving international audiences.

Meanwhile, media professionals who remain inside the country face severe risks, limited resources, unemployment and constant pressure from whichever armed faction controls their location.





The current media ecosystem in Sudan is thus characterised not by resilience or adaptation but by profound dysfunction. What exists is not a new model of information provision but rather the fragments of a destroyed system, held together by individual efforts, social media platforms, and the desperate need for information in a context of ongoing violence and humanitarian catastrophe.

Understanding this reality is essential for any attempt to support information provision or media development in Sudan, as it requires acknowledging that the previous media landscape is not temporarily disrupted but fundamentally destroyed, with no clear route for reconstruction whilst the conflict continues.

Digital and social media

According to **Datareportal**, as of January 2025, internet penetration in Sudan was low at just over 28% of the population, approximately 14.6 million users although this was an increase of nearly 2% from 2024.

Penetration rates and user demographics

Facebook has established itself as the predominant social media platform, capturing approximately 94% of mobile users according to **Datareportal 2025**.

Current figures indicate roughly 6.06 million social media accounts nationwide, with men comprising 72.3% of users.

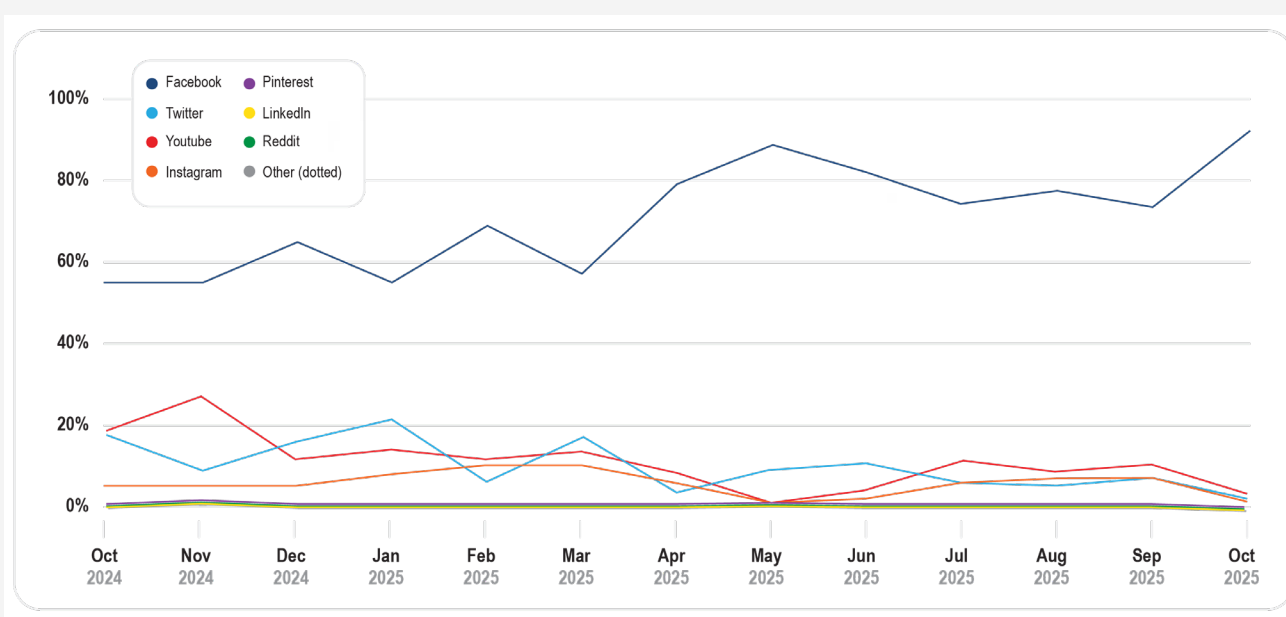
Significant questions persist about the authenticity of profiles, with substantial numbers likely representing duplicates or fabricated identities. Before the outbreak of war, estimates placed Facebook's user base at 3.6 million.

However, the combination of conflict, economic collapse and widespread population displacement has severely disrupted the digital landscape and figures are less indicative than behaviour.

Primary language usage (Arabic)

Arabic serves as the overwhelmingly preferred language for Sudanese Facebook content, particularly within propaganda and war-related material that employs hashtags, catchphrases, and ideological messaging.

English language accounts and usage surface mainly amongst diaspora populations and internationally-oriented profiles, whilst domestic audiences engage almost exclusively in Arabic. Manipulative and viral material frequently incorporates regional dialects or euphemistic phrasing to evade any detection whilst at the same time maximising impact.



Social Media use per platform in Sudan (October 2024-October 2025)



Key groups and pages

Numerous accounts— including, **Faris ElNur, Sudanese Against Kaizan** (سودانيين ضد الكيزان) and **Gharbia Channel** (قناة غربية) —operate as transmitters for information manipulation, openly praising military strikes and civilian casualties.

Military factions deploy specialised information warfare units that construct legitimising narratives and defensive positioning, whilst relief agencies and humanitarian personnel are subjected to smear campaigns which are designed to erode public confidence.

Community-based organisations and civil society networks attempt to chronicle developments and rally local support through Facebook. At the same time, they struggle to compete with the visibility achieved by content created by warring factions and their proxies.

Prevalent disinformation strategies encompass rationalisation of atrocities, incitement of ethnic and communal hatred, defamation of aid personnel, and circulation of repurposed or deceptive material. Facebook's recommendation systems exacerbate polarisation by privileging divisive content, generating insular information environments that solidify partisan worldviews and facilitate conflict-driven mobilisation.

During September and October 2025, the social media monitoring captured a case of hate speech and incitement circulated on Facebook by a user with approximately 9,300 followers.

The individual reshared a **video** showing what appear to be civilians rounded up and seated on the ground, adding the caption: *“Do you think this was a party in Khartoum, you bunch of filthy bastards?”*

His post is framed in a way that dehumanises the subjects and encourages hostility, using derogatory language that reinforces polarisation and animosity within the conflict context.

The post gained significant traction, reaching 90,000 views, 214 reactions, 80 comments, and 127 shares, far exceeding the account's usual engagement range of 2–10,000 views on videos.

This particular page frequently uploads low-quality battlefield footage that amplifies RSF narratives, positioning this user as a source of pro-RSF content and conflict messaging.

Such messaging, particularly when paired with recycled conflict imagery and inflammatory insults, normalises violence, escalates hateful discourse, and contributes to the wider information battlefield fuelled by disinformation and online incitement.

Usage patterns across different territories

Facebook's function shifts according to territorial control and political dynamics: within active battle zones, the platform operates chiefly as an instrument for propaganda dissemination, narrative control, and recruitment; across disputed or humanitarian corridors, it simultaneously provides vital information whilst serving as infrastructure for orchestrated attacks on relief workers.

Sudanese diaspora communities depend on Facebook to maintain transnational ties through private groups and public channels, though they remain vulnerable to coordinated deception campaigns.

The platform's algorithmic preferences reward sensational and emotionally provocative material, whilst organised networks of public and private groups have shown positive impacts on the community while systematically redistribute content to expand the circulation of falsehoods.

During the monitoring period, Facebook functioned as a critical infrastructure for community mobilisation, particularly within the Sudanese diaspora.



Numerous public and private groups were used to raise funds to support people fleeing El-Fasher after its fall and relocating toward the Northern State, with users coordinating transport, sharing safe-route updates, and facilitating direct cash transfers.

Tracking also identified hyperlocal mutual-aid activity, including groups such as Madani residents' **groups**, where members circulated footage of a convoy carrying aid to survivors.

At the same time, the social media monitors observed a semi-moderated private women-focused Facebook groups, which was previously centred on personal or domestic conversation, temporarily transforming into a **fund-raising hub**, cumulatively raising hundreds of millions of Sudanese pounds within days.

These mobilisations emerged in direct response to waves of hate speech and polarising narratives following the fall of El-Fasher, which framed the event as a deliberate abandonment of western Sudan by central regions. The visibility of aid convoys therefore functioned not only as logistical support but also as a counter-narrative effort, reinforcing inter-regional solidarity amid escalating digital hostility.

However, not all Facebook spaces operated as support networks. In several public groups which expressed support for SAF, the monitoring recorded the continued circulation of manipulated media and unverified information, suggesting that misleading content persists and spreads more easily in unmoderated environments.

X (formerly Twitter)



Penetration rates and user demographics

X functions as a critical venue for political debate, information exchange, and narrative shaping throughout Sudan's ongoing conflict.

Nonetheless, X accounts represent a relatively small segment of internet information consumption. In Sudan, X's share of social-media use has fluctuated sharply during the conflict period.

According to **Statcounter** data, X accounted for 9.41% of social-media platform usage in November 2024, before surging to a peak of 21.27% in January 2025, reflecting heightened reliance on real-time information channels during escalations in fighting and mass displacement.

Usage then showed intermittent rebounds in March and June 2025, but overall trended downward, falling to around 4.1% by November 2025.

This pattern suggests that despite moments of intense engagement, X's share of Sudan's social-media ecosystem has gradually eroded dramatically below Facebook (86.6%) and just under YouTube (6.7%). The decline may reflect worsening internet accessibility, user fatigue, platform instability after policy changes, or the migration of communities toward more immersive, video-driven or private-messaging platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Telegram.

Nevertheless, the platform wields a disproportionately large influence over political and war-related discussions, particularly amongst urban populations with mobile access and Sudanese communities abroad. Experts say X is one of the most problematic platforms in spreading false information and hate speech in Sudan. Social media monitoring featured users with heightened political engagement, actively circulating updates on humanitarian emergencies and battlefield developments across both combat zones and displacement contexts.

Social media monitoring flagged posts by politically aligned actors, diasporas, independent analysts, influencers, pseudo-anonymous and anonymous accounts as well as regional and global media houses and influencer accounts.

“It is a factory for creating disinformation and fake news. Why is it a factory for this? First of all, its reach - it’s very high...Secondly, it does not have a moderation platform. They removed their human rights teams, they removed rules and started relying on community notes- and in our region, these aren’t even present. Thirdly, it’s the easiest platform to create bots and fake accounts. Fourthly, you can get support from different accounts, from here and there, and it’s cross-regional, cross-country, Sudan, the Emirates...So if you are searching for a [fake] news, and you want to trace where did it originate from, you find it was X.” - Digital Rights Expert

Language preferences (Arabic and English)

Language choice on X reflects strategic audience targeting. Arabic dominates domestic political discourse and conflict-related content aimed at Sudanese and regional Arab audiences. English surfaces primarily in diaspora communications and content designed to engage international policymakers and Sudan watchers, humanitarian actors, and global media outlets.

This linguistic division creates parallel conversation streams. Arabic hashtags and posts drive localised mobilisation and factional narratives, whilst English content mainly seeks external validation, solidarity, and international pressure. Code-switching and bilingual posting occasionally bridge these spheres, particularly amongst politically sophisticated users attempting to navigate domestic and transnational advocacy landscapes.

Key accounts

X operates as a nerve centre for instant political exchange amongst Sudanese citizens in conflict territories, refugees, and diaspora communities. Partisan accounts and automated profiles magnify pro-SAF, pro-RSF, and divisive messaging.

Both Sudanese commentators such as Makkawi Elmalik and regional voices particularly Gulf analysts distribute live broadcasts, interpretative commentary, and opinion pieces, whilst pseudonymous accounts routinely recirculate footage to broaden exposure and shape interpretative frameworks.

Political, humanitarian, and ideological narratives coexist and clash on X, revealing patterns of division, collective action, and transnational influence throughout Sudan’s conflict discourse.

The platform hosts a diverse ecosystem of influential voices spanning Sudanese nationals, anonymous pages, and regional actors who drive conversation through livestreamed content, analytical commentary, and editorial perspectives. Accounts such as Sudan War Updates command significant followings, whilst Gulf commentators for example contribute cross-border perspectives that resonate with Sudanese audiences.

Anonymous accounts play a substantial role in content redistribution, frequently sharing video clips and curated material to expand reach and control narrative interpretation. This layered influencer landscape combines verified personalities, regional analysts, and anonymous amplifiers who collectively shape public perception and mobilise support across factional lines.

Hashtag activism and trending topics

On X, hashtags function simultaneously as instruments for conversation and amplification tools for competing narratives.

The platform’s algorithm privileges temporal immediacy, user interaction, and networked propagation, meaning hashtags that generate substantial early engagement, through likes, retweets, responses, or shares from prominent accounts, can rapidly trend and penetrate audiences beyond immediate networks.



The most frequently appearing hashtags include #elfasher, #alfashir, #saf, #sudan, #بالفاشر, #ميديا_ودملاح, #يحي_السنواتر and #غربية_للأخبار, بورتسودان collectively accounting for 37% of total content monitored in this period.

Within Sudan's conflict environment, hashtags such as #Darfur or #Elfashir, alongside ideologically weighted Arabic tags, frequently signal mobilisation efforts, spotlight breaking incidents, or construct political framing. English-language hashtags like #KeepEyesonSudan also target international observers.

Hashtag efficacy stems from posting a volume of content and also from user interconnectedness, encompassing influencers, automated networks, and cross-platform circulation, which all determine both the visibility and the perceived credibility of associated narratives.

Analysis reveals inconsistent and platform-specific tagging practices. While Facebook users apply hashtags intermittently, X users deploy them more strategically for narrative signalling. TikTok hashtags incorporate emojis, spelling variations, and viral tags which prioritise algorithms over accuracy.

This concentration of recurring hashtags demonstrates a narrative ecosystem heavily fixated on the El-Fashir battlefield during the monitoring period, which is supported by SAF-oriented messaging and amplified through national identifiers like #sudan to maximise visibility and audience penetration throughout the reporting timeframe.



Penetration rates and user demographics
TikTok has established itself as a high-impact, video-centric platform in Sudan, commanding particular influence amongst younger age cohorts.

On TikTok, both domestic and regional content creators generate engagement and shape

perceptions of the conflict. According to **DataReportal (Digital 2025)**, TikTok's potential reach amongst Sudanese adults aged 18 and above stands at 3.68 million users, constituting approximately 13.6% of the adult population which is a substantial increase from 2.91 million in early 2024, representing 26% year-on-year growth. Gender demographics reveal roughly 7:3 man to women users. These statistics highlight the platform's accelerating influence and the magnitude at which video material, including deliberate falsehoods, can propagate. In an analysis **published** by Darfur Followups in November 2025 about Sudan's "digital war," TikTok is described as a major hub where conflict-related videos and citizen journalism are shared widely, often more rapidly than in traditional media or text-heavy social networks. The report further highlights that TikTok, Facebook and X are inundated with videos of fighters, celebratory war footage and influencer-led propaganda, helping normalise violence and shape public perception in real time.

Video-based disinformation

Monitoring demonstrates that TikTok content encompasses a spectrum from **artificially-generated videos** by accounts such as @11_sd_jeed, often featuring Gulf-accented narration, to livestream excerpts from largely Sudanese like @abutasneem249 and Egyptian (@al5olasa.eslamaw) content streamers and creators.

Videos frequently convey alarmist, conspiratorial, and divisive messaging, including assertions that peace negotiations are a sham, that SAF bears responsibility for Sudan's fragmentation, or that RSF military operations warrant justification.



The platform's combination of entertainment formats with informational or news content, combined with influencer-driven storytelling, enables material to reach substantial audiences rapidly and across platforms, thereby complicating fact-checking efforts.

Viral content dynamics

Hashtags such as #يفارصنالال (Al-Insirafi) and #مِسْح_هَعَرْس_هِيَزْهَاج (Readiness, speed, completion) serve as amplification mechanisms designed to maximise virality and algorithmic visibility.

Anonymous profiles and redistributed livestream content by accounts such as **@external276** have propelled certain videos beyond 1.7 million views, illustrating TikTok's capacity to shape public narratives, construct event interpretations, and stimulate both engagement and partisan division. The platform's recommendation algorithm rewards sensational and emotionally resonant material, creating opportunities for quick content escalation that can transform localised incidents into widely-circulated talking points within hours.

Entertainment and news overlap

TikTok occupies a distinctive position where entertainment merges with news, blurring traditional boundaries between leisure consumption and information gathering. This convergence is particularly potent amongst younger audiences who increasingly rely on it. The entertainment-news hybrid format makes TikTok a channel for real-time battlefield updates and a vector for sophisticated disinformation at the same time.

Fighters live-stream battles like performances, diaspora commentators narrate events as content, and edited war clips with music and memes circulate as fast as breaking news, migrating from TikTok into X and from YouTube into TikTok. This turns conflict into consumable media, with youth-heavy audiences encountering atrocity, propaganda and updates in the same feed.

Monitoring TikTok will necessitate robust protocols, rigorous verification processes, and cross-platform

analytical approaches to comprehend its impact on public understanding throughout Sudan's ongoing conflict. Tracking content migration to YouTube and messaging applications like WhatsApp and Telegram will be critical in order to understand how information is being spread.

YouTube



Penetration rates and user demographics
YouTube occupies a pivotal position within the conflict and digital ecosystem of Sudan. It functions as the primary repository of raw material that subsequently undergoes repurposing, extraction, and amplification across platforms like TikTok. YouTube accounts constitute approximately 8.3% of social media activity on mobile devices in Sudan (**2024–2025 data**).

Despite this comparatively modest share, livestreams, extended videos, and broadcasts hosted on YouTube operate as a "reservoir" from which highly distributable, emotionally manipulative short-form videos are extracted.

Monitoring reveals that numerous TikTok clips in circulation originate directly from YouTube sources, granting them extended longevity, expanded audiences, and alternative interpretative frameworks. Throughout this reporting period, Egypt-based YouTube content creators substantially influenced this ecosystem. Following the fall of El Fasher, these actors constructed the conflict through a national security lens, consistently championing SAF, condemning the RSF, and characterising Sudan as a strategic imperative for Egyptian interests. Creators such as AlRiwai, who has 651,000 followers, published a **video on 29th October** that accumulated over 400,000 views which took this exact position against the RSF in El Fasher.

Key groups and pages

The infamous Al-Insirafi maintains a website linking to a YouTube account entitled **Sudan Times**, which holds only 49,900 subscribers. However, his material circulates extensively through secondary channels and accounts such as **Baladna SD**, amplifying his influence far beyond the original

account. Because such creators typically produce extended commentary and maintain archives on YouTube, even following suspension or removal of their primary accounts, their content acquires longevity, credibility, and transnational circulation. Throughout October 2025, multiple YouTube channels circulated reports concerning developments in Sudan. Several channels emphasised military support furnished by Turkey and Egypt to Sudanese armed forces, whilst others disseminated fabricated claims regarding Turkish aircraft fundamentally altering battlefield dynamics in Sudan. One particular video accumulated 6,400 likes and 734 comments.

Additionally, an Egyptian influencer commanding 46,800 subscribers on his YouTube channel propagated misleading interpretations of a statement in which the UAE denied involvement in Sudan's conflict, mischaracterising the UAE's documented role in the ongoing situation.

WhatsApp



"I would say the most dangerous place is definitely WhatsApp and encrypted platforms."
- **Sudanese OSINT investigator**

Penetration rates and user demographics

WhatsApp maintains its position as the most extensively adopted messaging application in Sudan, with its group-oriented architecture facilitating swift circulation of text messages, photographs, audio recordings, and video files across familial, neighbourhood, and community networks. Historical evidence suggests remarkably high uptake.

A **Media Landscape** report suggests that as early as 2014, 93% of mobile users in Sudan utilised WhatsApp. According to the 2024 **Next Generation Sudan youth study** conducted by the British Council, 13% of young people depend upon dedicated chat groups, including WhatsApp and Telegram, for information gathering, with many considering these peer-mediated networks highly credible.

When combined with substantial group membership numbers and frequent interaction patterns, this

generates conditions conducive to coordinated information dissemination, collective mobilisation, and narrative reinforcement. WhatsApp has also emerged as a key tool for journalists and information gathering.

Challenges in verification

WhatsApp's closed communication groups make it difficult to collect information, as access is restricted and membership is required to view content. Additionally, limitations related to accessing WhatsApp groups, and the technological challenges of collecting WhatsApp data all contributed to the constraints faced in gathering information from WhatsApp.

Nevertheless, interviews and anecdotal evidence suggests that the high level of infodemic on the platform clearly enables misinformation and hate speech to circulate easily without verification.

TELEGRAM



Telegram has emerged as an increasingly vital platform in Sudan for news distribution, coordination activities, and circulation of sensitive material, particularly throughout the ongoing conflict. Its broadcast channel functionality and capacity to accommodate substantial subscriber numbers enable both civil society actors and factional representatives to disseminate updates, imagery, and video content swiftly.

While there is no publicly available data on the exact number of Telegram users in Sudan or the reach of disinformation campaigns, qualitative research by **Cornell University** suggests that the platform plays a critical role in shaping perceptions, mobilizing engagement, and circulating narratives that may polarise communities.

According to documentation from the Africa Center and **Shabaka**, Telegram forms a part of the broader disinformation infrastructures employed by RSF-aligned networks, SAF sympathisers, and various other parties to propagate emotionally manipulative narratives, fabricated claims, and mobilisation appeals.

Encrypted communication and alternative to mainstream platforms

The platform's semi-private and encrypted architecture reinforces user privacy, making it appealing for information exchange whilst simultaneously creating space for unverified content and orchestrated messaging that evades external surveillance.

This positions Telegram as an alternative to more transparent mainstream social media platforms, particularly attracting users who might be concerned about government monitoring or platform censorship. The encryption features can protect vulnerable sources and activists but ultimately shield coordinated disinformation operations from scrutiny.

Distribution of sensitive information

Cross-platform coordination proves commonplace, with Telegram content frequently amplified through WhatsApp, X, and additional social media channels, thereby expanding reach and magnifying influence.

Whilst publicly accessible data regarding precise Telegram user numbers in Sudan or disinformation campaign scope remains unavailable, qualitative research by Cornell University's Arxiv suggests the platform fulfils a critical function in moulding perceptions, stimulating engagement, and circulating narratives that may deepen community divisions.

Rapid Support Forces (RSF) maintains an active public page on Telegram, although its official presence on X (formerly Twitter) was suspended on 20 October 2024. A public statement circulated by the RSF on its official Telegram channel on October 26 2025 demonstrates how the platform is used to distribute updates and frame sensitive information for reputation-building and narrative control.

The announcement portrays the takeover of Al-Fasher as a humanitarian "liberation" and invokes international law and civilian protection language to legitimise military actions. This reflects a wider dynamic in Sudan's conflict media ecosystem where armed groups use legalistic and humanitarian rhetoric to recast violence and territorial gains as stabilising and rights-respecting operations.

Telegram has become the fallback platform for RSF's public communications, highlighting the importance of encrypted and semi-private channels for distribution of sensitive information, narrative control, and propaganda after removal from mainstream social media.

Given that channels run by conflict actors are associated with surveillance, doxing, and coordinated propaganda, entering or collecting data directly from such spaces carries serious safety and research-ethics risks. As such, they are referenced only as illustrative of how sensitive information is strategically packaged and disseminated, rather than as credible data sources.

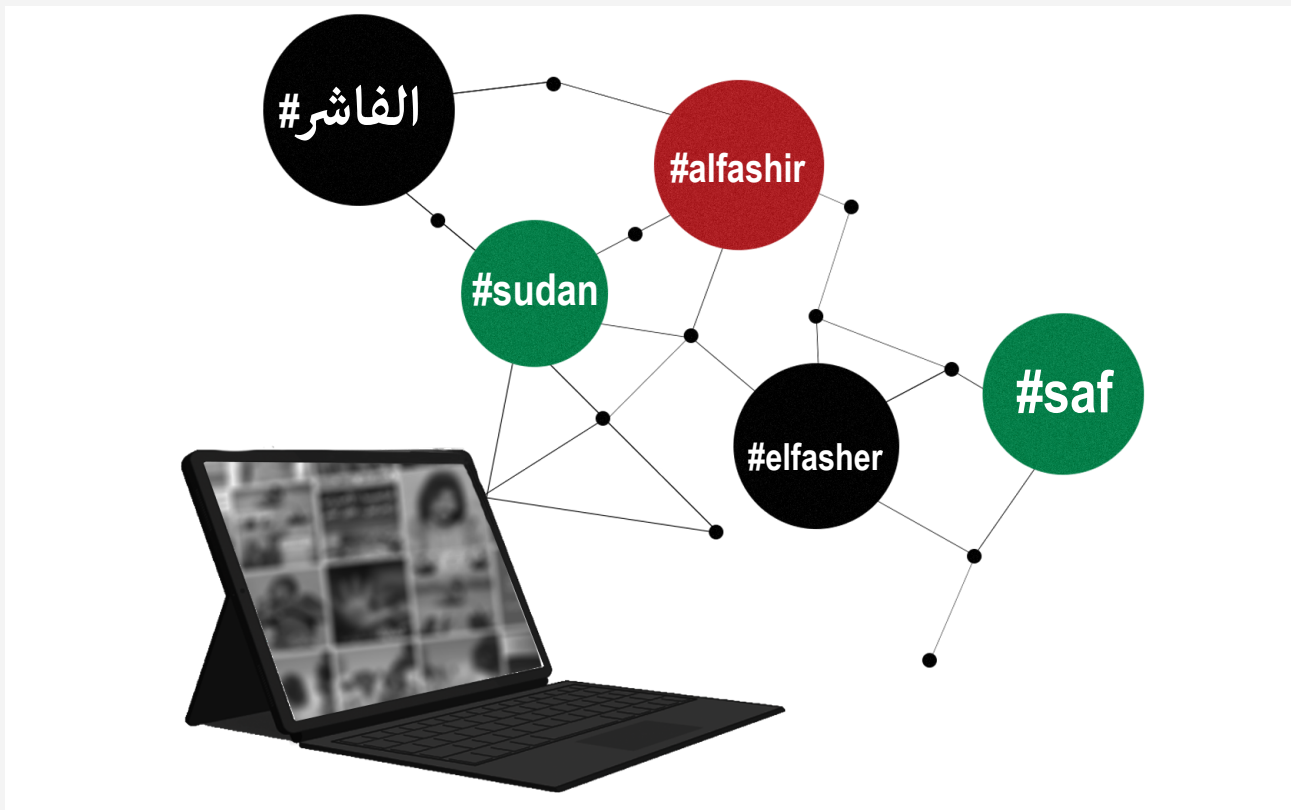
Challenges in verification

Given these operational characteristics, Telegram operates simultaneously as an instrument for information sharing within high-risk environments and as a conduit through which misinformation and propaganda circulate.

Monitoring and understanding its utilisation therefore proves essential for mapping disinformation infrastructures, identifying emergent narratives, and designing counter-measures, even though quantitative evaluation remains constrained by the platform's privacy-centred architecture and absence of public analytics.



5. Online political discourse in September & October 2025



The two-month monitoring period of September and October 2025 captured an escalation in Sudan's information warfare, coinciding with military operations in El Fasher.

Social listening across X, Facebook, and online news platforms identified systematic patterns of information manipulation that both preceded and followed key military events, revealing sophisticated coordination between physical violence and digital campaigns.

The data demonstrates how conflict parties weaponised online platforms to shape narratives, intimidate populations, and obscure atrocities through a combination of traditional propaganda techniques and emerging AI-enabled manipulation.

This section examines the evolution of online discourse during this period, mapping the relationship between military developments and coordinated information operations across Sudan's fragmented digital ecosystem.

Between 1 September and 31 October 2025, the social listening data which was collected across X, Facebook, YouTube and online news platforms included 6,348 posts that were then reviewed, classified and categorised as information manipulation.

The posts reached a combined audience of 890,225,854 users and generated 45,870 engagements. This exercise followed rigorous data cleaning and systematic coding according to the ABCDE and DISARM frameworks. Arabic-language content overwhelmingly dominated the landscape, constituting approximately 89% of all posts, whilst English content surfaced primarily through diaspora-oriented X accounts.

The monitoring effort distributed across multiple platforms revealed distinct patterns: Facebook yielded 15 collected posts.



This number is lower due to the fact that posts are often taken down quickly on Facebook, X and TikTok, and were not initially traceable. The methodology has since included an archiving tool for all flagged content to contribute to long-term data collection and future referencing.

X produced 2,852 collected posts; online news and digital media pages contributed 1,702 collected posts. YouTube videos, comments, and micro-clips re-uploaded to messaging channels generated 1,948 collected posts.

Semi-public and dark social channels proved particularly significant, with TikTok contributing 19 flagged posts, Facebook providing an additional 9, and X adding 4 flagged posts.

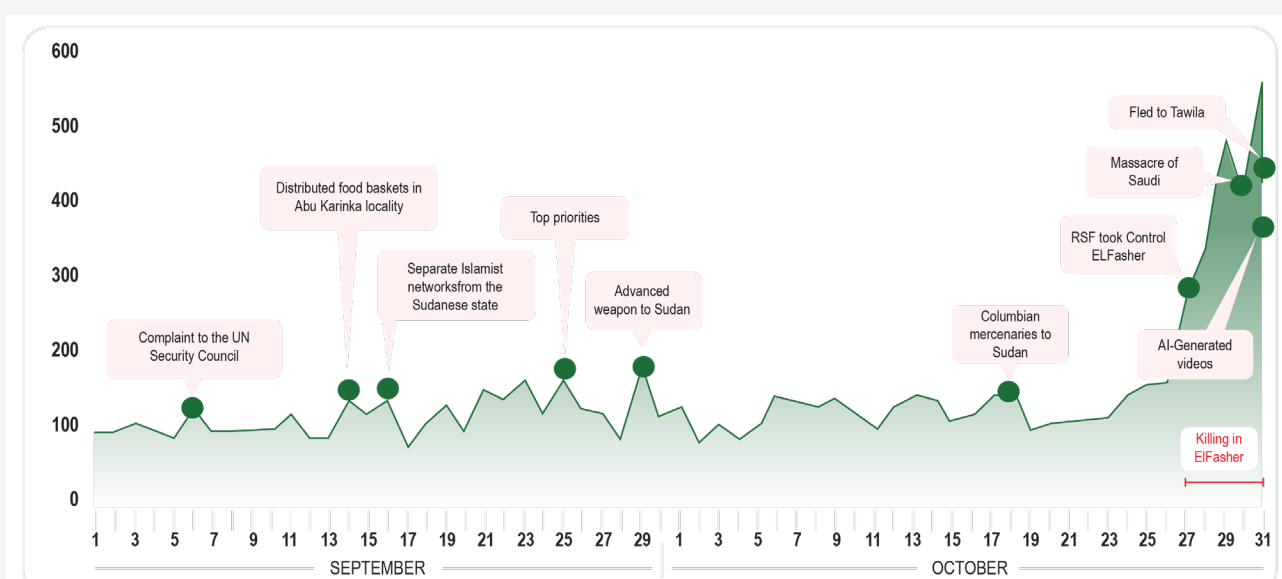
In Sudan's conflict media landscape, a significant share of information circulates through dark social and semi-public channels (encrypted WhatsApp and Telegram groups, diaspora fundraising or regionally specific private or closed Facebook groups).

These trust-based spaces serve as lifelines for rapid mobilisation, community support, and real-time crisis updates.

However, they can also host unverified claims, escalating rumours, and polarising narratives that remain largely beyond platform moderation.

Our monitoring approach was designed to respect ethical boundaries and existing access structures. The monitoring analysed content from spaces where the team already had legitimate entry, including groups where members were personally involved or connected, or content surfaced through our own team's social-media algorithms, search results, and keyword tracking. For semi-public groups, particularly when harmful posts were disappearing from public mainstream platforms, the team applied to join groups transparently, ensuring they did not infiltrate authentically or breach private communities.

This enabled safe, responsible observation of narratives and harmful content in environments where platform moderation was failing, while prioritising the safety, privacy and informed involvement of our team and their networks. Surveillance of dark social and semi-public channels proved essential for detecting the circulation of AI-manipulated content, fraudulent humanitarian appeals, and polarising narratives, underscoring the central function of such closed networks within Sudan's conflict-information ecosystem.



The figure shows Meltwater tracking for social and digital media activity peaks and key events and narratives during the monitoring period of September - October 2025.



Social Media and Information Warfare in Sudan's Civil War: The Case of El Fasher

The online discourse in the period leading up to and surrounding the battles in El Fasher demonstrates a highly organised escalation of information manipulation, characterised by sophisticated propaganda campaigns and the strategic deployment of artificial intelligence to manipulate narratives and undermine the documentation of atrocities. This information warfare has become a defining feature of the war in Sudan.

Discourse Before the Battles: Propaganda and Intimidation

Disinformation campaigns were strategically launched prior to the major military confrontations in El Fasher, focusing on intimidating the opposition and justifying future military action.

There was a surge in RSF propaganda weaponised to intimidate the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and local civilian populations, urging them to leave their positions. This included posting numerous videos and live broadcasts via TikTok showing large numbers of RSF troops driving openly, declaring they were “coming to El Fasher, we’re coming to liberate it from the terrorists”.

Evidence of RSF brutality began circulating on social media before the significant battles. On September 5th, a video published by the Sudanese Echo showed what appeared to be RSF soldiers whipping two civilians, one seated and the other crawling on his knees, whilst forcing them to make sheep sounds.

The soldiers asked them about El-Fasher and whether they wanted to return, to which they replied, ‘we won’t go back.’ The soldiers then threw money at them, taunting them to return. The video used English subtitles and hashtags such as #Rapid_Support_Is_A_Terrorist_Organization and reached 1,700 views on X.

Three days later, on September 8th another video emerged showing what appeared to be RSF soldiers rounding up civilians attempting to leave El-Fasher. The civilians, mostly young men with one older individual, were blindfolded, seated on the ground, and subjected to whipping and verbal abuse as they raised their hands in plea.

The video included hashtags referencing the UN, International Criminal Court (ICC), and Amnesty International and was viewed 48,300 times with 39 comments, 103 reposts, 356 likes and 72 bookmarks.

On September 9th, a counter-narrative emerged when a user published a video shared by the Sudanese Echo featuring a Sudanese woman celebrating with tears of joy and expressing gratitude to the army for freeing the region. The post stated that “these truths cannot be purchased with Emirati money or falsehoods”. This post was shared approximately 23 times and achieved a reach of more than 43,140 views.

This countered the media and online rhetoric used by pro-RSF accounts during the siege period which framed the situation by claiming that all civilians who wished to leave had been evacuated, meaning “there’s no one left in the city except the outlaws and those supporting the army and fighters”. This narrative effectively designated all remaining civilians as legitimate targets.

On September 25th, Makkawi Elmalik, a writer and influencer with 48,000 followers, published screenshots of an article with alarming commentary about “pressures on the government now”. He discussed the peace agreement as a cover employed by the United States at a time of military progress in various regions.

He analysed the situation, proposing that the main objective of the peace agreement was to sustain the presence of the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan and to hinder the army from achieving total dominance over the country.



He responded to remarks made by Masaad Boulos, US Senior Adviser for Arab and African Affairs, who asserted that RSF and SAF are equal, arguing that this was inaccurate and that the army had control over 80% of Sudanese territory. He concluded by stating that Sudan must either accept a deceptive peace or seek a military resolution. The article was viewed 131,173 times and had more than 170 engagements.

On October 8th, the Guardian published an article about the recruitment of Colombian mercenaries to fight alongside the RSF in Sudan. In early August, Sudan's army-aligned state television had reported that Emirati aircraft carrying Colombian mercenaries had been shot down near an RSF-controlled airport. The claim ricocheted across media outlets, though no evidence was provided. The topic continued to be covered with a report by investigative outlet the Sentry in November 2025 which linked the UAE with RSF business interests, including supplying mercenaries.

The RSF's messaging at this point focused on the SAF's "grip on northern Darfur", promising that if the RSF were to win El Fasher, they would bring peace to North Darfur. Whilst systematic hate speech used to target specific ethnic groups preceded violence in El Geneina, it was not as apparent immediately before the major violence in El Fasher although present.

The RSF media machines were promoting the narrative that *felloul* [remnants] of both the Bashir regime - and therefore Kayzan/Islamists - had remained in El-Fasher - and that the RSF had allowed all civilians to leave. However, stakeholders who were interviewed speculated whether the intense hate speech utilised earlier in El Geneina had served to motivate the heavy, segregated attacks in El Fasher, particularly against Nubian tribes and Black Darfurians.

The Capture of El Fasher

On October 26th, the Rapid Support Force (RSF) took control of El Fasher, subsequently **announcing**

its dominance over the area. This marked a turning point both militarily and in terms of online information warfare. The period immediately following the battles was dominated by sophisticated tactics aimed at controlling the narrative, primarily through the use of AI-generated content to undermine atrocity documentation.

The spike on October 26th was also attributed to RSF apprehension of an **Al-Jazeera journalist**, which generated calls for his release by activists and media such as Sudaress and Altaghyeer. Access to verifiable information was rendered impossible at this time due to a complete network blackout according to interviewees.

The Sudanese Journalists' Syndicate (SJS) lost contact with many journalists in the area. It was noted that news regarding arrests or the fate of missing journalists only became known through propaganda videos broadcast by the perpetrators themselves.

The use of AI and deepfakes reached a critical point following the events in El Fasher. In the period following the conflict, an estimated 90% of the videos and posters that spread were AI-generated, not real, according to one stakeholder interviewed.

As famine spread across the region, photographs of malnourished or abused children—often taken in other African countries—proliferated. Videos of battlefield victories, set to triumphant music, circulated alongside graphic clips of violence.

The intense focus and utilisation of AI in the El Fasher coverage successfully overshadowed the documentation and news on real, serious crimes that occurred in other areas like Bara in North Kordofan.

On October 27th, **Yale University's Humanitarian Research Lab report** on the atrocities committed by the RSF was published, revealing mass atrocities and pools of blood detected by satellite images. The report quickly circulated and was quoted by regional and international media.



On October 28th, the spike continued as residents of El Fasher began **fleeing to Tawila**, searching for shelter and food, with humanitarian organisations warning of escalating violence and appeals for aid and response.

On October 29th, an **AI manipulated image** originating from an Instagram reel created by Al Jazeera digital producer and AI artist Khoubaib Ben Ziou, who explicitly clarified that it was AI-generated, was shared by high-profile diaspora and regional influencers before it was confirmed by AFP as manipulated content.

This incident occurred on the same day that reports indicated a horrific massacre at the Saudi hospital, resulting in the deaths of over 460 patients and their companions. **Disturbing videos and reports** surfaced regarding the killings of individuals and families in El Fasher, including women and children. Users, influencers, and advocacy groups continued to post content and share Yale's Humanitarian Research Lab's report and media coverage.

By October 30th, the spike was largely due to emergence of **hashtags and content** denouncing the UAE for the atrocities occurring in El Fasher and calls for a boycott predominantly found on X. The content was simultaneously high across TikTok, **X** and **YouTube**, with hashtags such as #EmiratesKillsSudanese and #RSFisaTerroristMilitia were used.

The RSF and its supporters heavily publicised war criminals like Abu Lolo, who was known for horrific events. He appeared on platforms bragging about killing “more than two thousand” people, which was met with laughter and cheering by guests. AI-generated images, including statues, were even created to portray him as a ‘hero’ or ‘boogeyman’ figure.

One viral video authenticated by AFP showed a woman in RSF uniform identifying herself as Major Shiraz Khaled, urging RSF fighters to rape women. She proclaimed that fighters should enter Sudan's northern region “for its girls” and “to purify their lineage”.

The same woman later appeared in a TikTok video showing a warm encounter with a presenter from the Emirati network Sky News Arabia during a mid-November visit to El Fasher. The presenter subsequently posted on X, condemning what she described as “disinformation campaigns” on Darfur, echoing the rhetoric of the RSF.



The figure shows the top-ranking hashtags used in flagged social media content across all monitored social media channels.

This type of content was deliberately used by actors, including the RSF and their foreign consultants, to flood the media space and later deny documented atrocities according to stakeholders. The strategy was to spread misleading or fabricated images of suffering and then debunk them, thereby creating scepticism about the authenticity of any real atrocity footage, suggesting all media circulating was false. This approach entrench what one interviewee call the “liar’s dividend”, the idea that denials and counterclaims can be weaponised to divert attention, evade accountability, or undermine an adversary.

“What we’ve seen a couple of times is where there might be volumes of inauthentic content being put out by inauthentic accounts. So fake videos, fake photos...to undermine the credibility of the information environment. That’s very much a kind of Russian tactic as well which you can put some fake videos out of something that is well documented and then say when you see a truthful video or is it really true.” - Digital investigator

When accused of killing 460 patients and healthcare workers at a hospital in El Fasher based on images disseminated by its fighters, the RSF rejected the allegations as “narratives... with no connection to the truth”. On its Telegram channel, the group countered with videos showing its fighters distributing aid and medical personnel tending to the wounded.

In October, an image of a public hanging circulated widely after Algeria’s representative to the United Nations invoked it as evidence of RSF abuses.

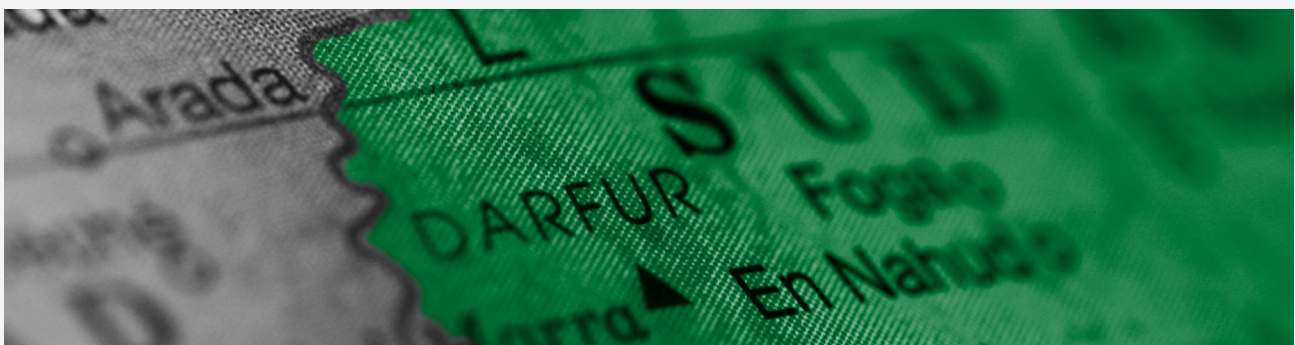
Beam Reports later confirmed that the photograph had appeared months earlier in Chad and bore no relation to Sudan. Similar manipulations surfaced in pro-RSF messaging, including recycled images purportedly showing Sudanese soldiers looting homes.

Campaigns were detected, often written in English, that sought to manipulate the perception of the conflict for foreign audiences, notably framing the events in El-Fasher as a religious war against Christians, despite Darfur being a Muslim-dominated region. These campaigns were accounts based in the United Arab Emirates and Israel.

The Top Ten hashtags for disinformation monitoring during the period reveals a mixture of Arabic and English language hashtags, representing the language preferences of X users.

X is widely used in Sudan’s information war, although it typically ranks behind Facebook and TikTok in terms of overall consumption by the general Sudanese public. X is the site of **systematic disinformation campaigns**.

Actors leverage the platform to circulate politically motivated content and shape public opinion hence the use of specific hashtags which reference El Fasher, Sudan and the UAE in equal measures. According to interviewees, the platform is also used to publish false information about Sudanese political actors, such as lists identifying “traitors and agents,” which targets activists and journalists.



X is explicitly used to manipulate foreign perception of the conflict. One campaign identified was designed to reach an international audience by pushing narratives which are often written in English that framed the conflict in El-Fasher as a religious war against Christians, despite Darfur being a Muslim-dominated region.

Narrative Laundering, where disinformation often starts as a single post or tweet from an influencer or official source on X or Facebook before being shared across other platforms, is a key tactic used with these hashtags.

Actors also widely use **misleading hashtags** on X, creating tags that falsely claim to be circulated by citizens in Sudan to mislead public opinion.

The 6 top hashtags used during the monitoring period: #الفاشر , #السودان , #EmiratesKillsSudanese #sudan, #ElFashir & #السودانيين_تقتل_الامارات which aligns with the key word cloud for the monitoring period. Although the key words using for the data mining exercise differ, they indicate that the main focus of online discourse during the monitoring period was, unsurprisingly, on the battle for El-Fasher and related events.



Word cloud from the Meltwater search for this period, showing the level of usage of words by font size.

6. Actors



Sudan's information warfare has become as organised and systematic as the physical conflict itself, with multiple actors deploying sophisticated digital strategies to shape narratives, mobilise support, and obscure atrocities.

Understanding who produces, amplifies, and coordinates disinformation is essential to comprehending how information manipulation functions as a weapon of war. This section maps the primary actors driving information operations across

Sudan's fragmented digital ecosystem, examining their distinct tactics, platforms, and narrative strategies. The analysis distinguishes between the two warring parties, the RSF and SAF whose information operations reflect fundamentally different capabilities.

Whilst the RSF has constructed a technically sophisticated, foreign-backed apparatus optimised for algorithmic amplification and international audiences, SAF relies on volume, institutional authority, and diaspora mobilisation. Beyond these primary actors, the section examines supporting actors including Islamist groups, individual influencers, coordinated inauthentic behaviour

networks, and foreign entities providing financial and technical support.

Sudan's information ecosystem has become a battlefield as brutal as the physical conflict itself, with sophisticated actors on multiple sides deploying coordinated campaigns to shape public perception, mobilise supporters, militarise citizens particularly youth, and justify violence. The war between SAF and RSF is fought not only with weapons but through carefully orchestrated digital operations that blur facts, amplify hatred, and silence dissent.

The SAF and RSF media operations exhibit distinct differences in sophistication, target audience, and methodology, while Islamist and Bashir remnants play a supporting, traditional role. This is then further entrenched by influencers and individual accounts affiliated to either side of the warring parties plus coordinated inauthentic behaviour and bot armies largely supported by foreign actors backing the RSF.

When comparing SAF's information operations with those of RSF, the difference is in the content style and architecture of distribution and amplification. SAF relies on algorithmic optimisation and coordinated content generation to reinforce and recycle its narratives.



Official spokespeople, media-affiliated accounts, and aligned influencers push out synchronised talking points, while semi-official pages and groups replicate the messages in shorter formats.

The result is a system built to regulate messages and their repetition, rather than stylistic creativity. RSF's digital strategy evolved differently. In the earlier phase of the conflict, RSF content was observably more improvised with poor-quality field videos, livestreams, and the use of influencers and anonymous networks for mass reposting and bot support.

These methods were less polished but highly responsive and fast-moving, often originating directly from the battlefield or from military-adjacent influencers. However, the RSF ecosystem continued shifting as their accounts faced closures in 2023 and 2024 on Facebook and X respectively. After the El-Fasher campaign, the sudden spike in material linked to the UAE produced a new layer of content: longer posts, pseudo-intellectual analysis, and narratives framed for a Gulf and Western policy audience.

This has marked a transition from ad-hoc media to a more sophisticated messaging pipeline, with professional editing, editorial framing, and a more strategic narrative engineering. Nonetheless, RSF content from the battlefield is still reminiscent of the first days of the war, but with more editing for virality and cross platform dissemination as observed during this monitoring period.

The monitoring framework categorised actors into four typologies:

1. Individuals posting under their own names or personal accounts
2. Organisations producing coordinated messages including political groups, NGOs, media outlets, or activist networks
3. Anonymous networks operating accounts or platforms with no clear identity or ownership
4. Influencers commanding substantial followings, reach, engagement capacity, and narrative dissemination power.

These typologies emerged largely through the following types of accounts during the monitoring period and capture of El Fasher.

Individual users operated both as ordinary citizens and politically aligned accounts, posting under real or pseudo-anonymous identities. They shared raw footage, eyewitness testimonies, and nationalist messaging. Pro-SAF accounts like **@Bit_Khalifa1417** and **@FCB60** documented alleged RSF atrocities, whilst RSF-aligned users promoted RSF achievements and battlefield victories on X (including **@Nate_Jone**) and TikTok, though many of these accounts and content have since been suspended or deleted.

Organisational actors encompassed formal and semi-formal entities in the form of online news websites or political organisations. These included Monitor.ug, pseudo-news outlets such as **Shirazy TV**, and governance structures established by the RSF, including the Tasis administration.

Anonymous networks represented the most prolific category. They deployed bot-like clusters that coordinated activities such as flooding pro-RSF TikTok content with peace sign emoji comments. These networks utilised fake personas, **recycled avatar accounts** impersonating Sudanese women, and Facebook reposting hubs to amplify content. They disseminated viral propaganda, **AI-manipulated imagery**, and synchronised hashtag campaigns. When suspended or removed, these accounts typically re-emerged under new identities. **Influencers** served as critical amplification nodes. This category included **Sudanese livestreamers**, **Egyptian TikTok commentators**, **diaspora professionals**,

Rather than operating in isolation, these four actor categories functioned as an interconnected amplification system. Each reinforced the others, enabling disinformation and manipulated narratives to spread rapidly across X, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, as well as closed messaging networks many of which often persisted even after platforms removed or flagged original content.

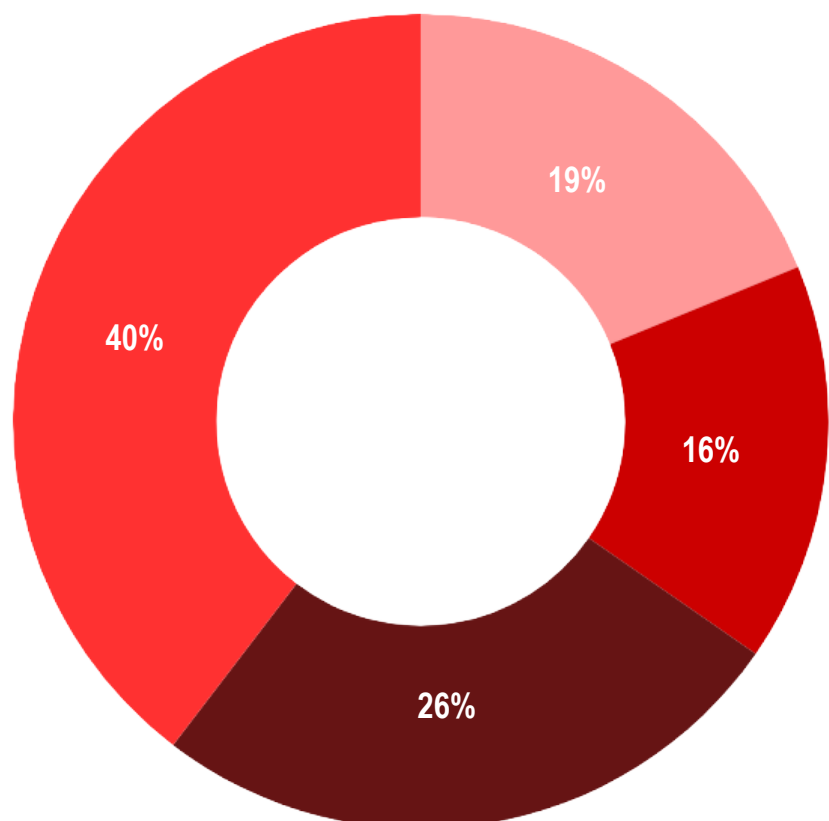
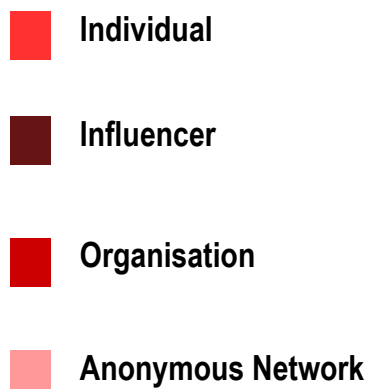


A Beam Reports investigation from **June 2025** documented one of the most sophisticated and structured RSF-aligned influence networks operating on X/Twitter. By October 2025, a significant proportion of accounts identified in the original Beam investigation had been suspended including Bandar (@2NONO2021) and several high-activity amplification accounts.

However, it equally highlights how coordinated networks attempt reconstruction under new pseudonyms following takedowns, with RSF-aligned clusters in particular continuing to materialise albeit with reduced stability and shorter operational lifespans.

This pattern might suggest that the platform-level intervention, seen by META, X and even TikTok, has been triggered by investigations, fact-checking initiatives, monitoring and cross-reporting by Sudanese digital rights actors, pointing to the significance of this type of work

Actors



Actor	Sophistication and Tactics	Narrative and Content
Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	High sophistication and advanced technology. Focuses on high-end content quality but often less volume. Uses AI to generate slick videos and imagery. Leverages TikTok heavily, operating as a «TikTok army» where young commanders film and broadcast atrocities in real-time. Employs advanced techniques like buying likes (amplification) and using professional, foreign-backed teams for editing and strategy. Uses Starlink for connectivity.	<p>Marginalisation Discourse: Portrays the conflict as a fight against the «Khartoum elite» or «Khartoum terrorists».</p> <p>Uses victimhood narratives and appeals to tribal sentiment. Weaponizes specific individuals, like Abu Lolo, to create a 'hero' status or 'boogeyman' figure.</p>
Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)	<p>Lower sophistication compared to the RSF. Initially relied on traditional, delayed official statements (e.g., daily operations briefs).</p> <p>Focuses on generating a large volume of content, often of lower quality. Relies more on written content and rudimentary deepfakes. Lacks the same organisational skill in marketing and online presence.</p>	<p>Nationalism and Dignity: Frames itself as the «saviour of Sudan» from foreigners black Africans (هوجولا), and/or تاتش برع (ةبيريغلا), the so-called “scattered Arabs,” who are Arabs of African descent.</p> <p>Promotes the “war of dignity” narrative. Uses traditional symbols, religious appeals, and established celebrities (artists, actors, athletes) for propaganda. Tries to deny or cover up civilian impact from its own actions (like airstrikes).</p>
Islamist Groups / Bashir affiliates	<p>Historically skilled in propaganda. Highly professional in structuring messages for the SAF. Their media networks are extensive and connected to the National Congress Party (NCP).</p> <p>They operate by spreading misinformation about military victories and failures of the civilian opposition.</p>	<p>Continuation of War: The primary agenda is the continuation of the war. They frame the conflict as an existential fight, focusing on themes like religious fervour and national identity (al-Qawmiyyah).</p> <p>They promote the narrative that the SAF is being controlled by Islamists (which the RSF then uses as counter-propaganda). They disseminate dehumanising rhetoric, such as comparing groups to “insects” similar to the Rwanda genocide.</p>



At the heart of Sudan's disinformation landscape are the two warring parties themselves, each deploying distinctly different digital strategies that reflect their broader organisational capabilities and political positioning. These groups are the main drivers, using disinformation deliberately to achieve specific strategic goals. They utilise systematic, organised, and sophisticated media campaigns. Both sides attempt to control the flow of information completely. For the purpose of the social listening exercise below, actors have been classified as either pro-RSF or pro-SAF accounts.

Some bloggers from some Arab countries or African countries enter the line supporting sides or benefit parties. There's a Yemeni blogger who became one of the main people - his name is Mansour - one of the people publishing news supporting the army. Some American bloggers publish what supports the Rapid Support Forces. Bloggers from Chad publish some things - some for the army and some for the Rapid Support Forces. Bloggers from South Sudan also publish, and all this publication is in Arabic. Member of Sudan Journalists Syndicate

The interviews also revealed the following actors to be historically involved in information manipulation in Sudan.

- Islamists Groups have been placed in the pro-SAF category to exemplify the nature of the disinformation ecosystem as it currently presents.
- Political/media organisations and influencers, loyal to one side or the other, operate through social media accounts to amplify the core narratives started by the SAF or RSF. Influencers, including prominent news reporters and anchors, artists, athletes, actors, religious figures, and tribal leaders, often possess millions of followers and are leveraged to spread content.
- Coordinated inauthentic behaviour (CIB) networks and bot armies, sometimes referred to as “media rooms,” operate across multiple countries and platforms to systematically spread disinformation, hate speech and anti-peace messaging.

– International entities play a critical role through financial, technical, and narrative support, often aligning with one of the two main Sudanese warring factions:

United Arab Emirates (UAE): The UAE is strongly implicated as a major foreign actor involved in creating and spreading disinformation, primarily supporting the RSF. They are linked to bot operations/networks. These bots are often used to sway public opinion and discredit the opposing side.

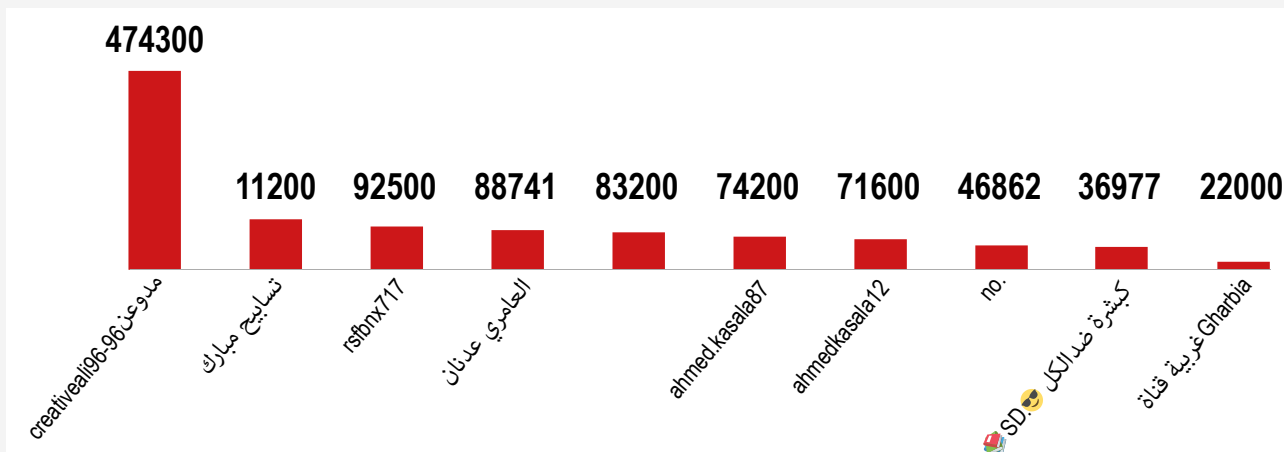
The UAE promotes narratives that undermine the credibility of the information environment in general, making journalists' claims of human rights abuses appear less verified. Pro-RSF trolls, often linked to the UAE, try to discredit Western actors and researchers by aligning them with «Islamist» or «terrorist» actors. Emirati platforms such as Aina News and Emirati Knights were tracked promoting content at the same time, indicating coordination.

Russia: Russia is involved in influence operations, aiming to undermine the information environment and push political narratives like «Russia good, West bad» across Africa. Russia has a corporate interest in controlling Sudan's gold and other resources.

Israel: Israeli channels and accounts have been noted for biased coverage and for participating in campaigns such as those related to El Fasher violations by pushing specific narratives, sometimes alongside Emirati accounts, to undermine the information ecosystem.

Egypt and Yemen: Influencers and artists from Egypt sometimes support the SAF, while Houthis-aligned Yemeni journalists spread disinformation supporting the army, often in opposition to the UAE's role.

Other Foreign Bases: Disinformation networks are managed from various locations globally, including Algeria, Mali, Singapore, New Zealand, Central Asian countries, and Southeast Asia (Indonesia).



The figure shows the top reaching flagged pro-RSF actors across monitored social media

Pro-RSF

Pro-RSF content was fuelled by accounts such as @creativeall96 and @rsfbnx717 on TikTok, and @TsabihAli on X, which illustrates the layered structure of anonymous, influencer/authoritative persona and semi-anonymous actors operating in coordinated narrative pipelines.

@creativeall96 functions as a high-reach redistribution node, reposting unverified conflict updates, panic messaging, and claims of military withdrawal.

It uses high-traffic hashtags #الفاشر, #الانصرافي, #الجيش, and alarmist framings to shape perceptions and push rumours into mainstream TikTok channels.

TV presenter Tasabih Mubarak constructs identity-based narratives, incorporating screenshots, selective media, and religious and gendered framing. While her content is more polished, it serves the same function: introducing sectarian, moral, or ideological explanations of the conflict and giving local rumours a transnational or Gulf-oriented narrative framing.

At the other end, @rsfbnx717 represents the micro-amplifier tier: anonymous accounts using hashtags and resharing formats to sow mistrust, warn about “fake media,” and position themselves as corrective voices without verification. Their content appears spontaneous and low-quality, but it plugs directly

into faction-aligned algorithmic channels.

Together, these actors form a coordinated distribution pattern: Tasabih provides narrative framing, creativeall96 delivers high-volume circulation, and rsfbnx717 spreads distrust and supportive cues.

Despite different styles and audiences, they rely on the same core mechanisms: unverified media, recycled clips, emotional framing, faction tags, and networked resharing, to push misinformation deeper into the Sudan conflict information ecosystem and polarize interpretation.

The RSF has built the most sophisticated digital disinformation apparatus, the product of multi-year investment in digital operations and partnerships with **professional public relations consultants** and support from **sophisticated information manipulation actors such as Russia**.

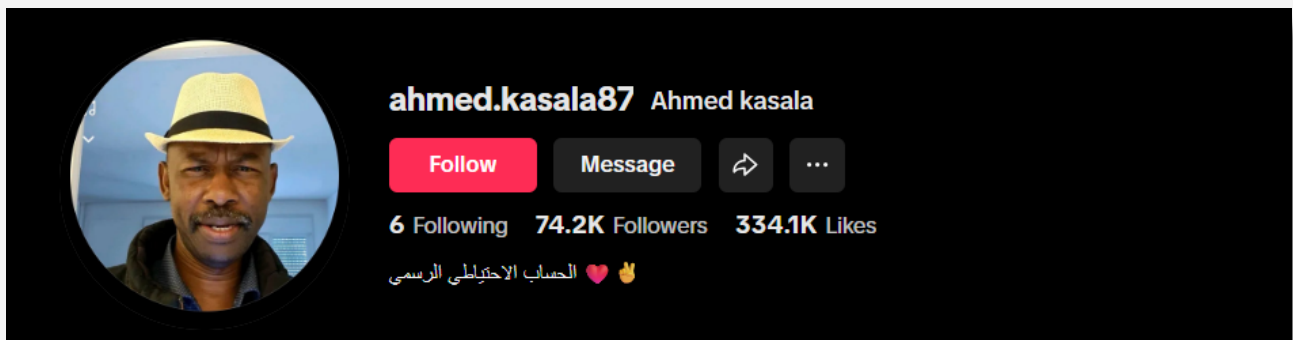
In a February 2025 report by Global Initiative titled “After the Fall: Russian modes of influence in Africa” Wagner Group was directly linked to the RSF, with the relationship built on gold exports.

What distinguishes the RSF’s approach from other actors in this space is its technical sophistication and coordinated execution. RSF-aligned networks consistently deploy polished multimedia content, voiceovers, clipped frontline videos, AI-enhanced

imagery, and synchronised multi-platform releases, to project inevitability, momentum, and territorial dominance. Young RSF commanders function as a “TikTok army,” filming and broadcasting atrocities in real-time whilst maintaining connectivity through Starlink technology. Their content is polished and algorithm-optimised including AI-generated imagery, slick video production with voiceovers, and professionally edited clips that project momentum and territorial dominance.

This isn’t amateur propaganda. It is the work of foreign-backed teams deploying advanced techniques including buying likes for amplification and creating fabricated visuals that circulate before fact-checkers can respond.

The RSF’s ecosystem operates across multiple layers. In August 2023, **META removed the groups official accounts to then be followed by X** just over a year later. They have managed to circumvent such takedowns in a number of ways using personal accounts of politicians and related institutions, many of which have been recently revealed to be **registered in the UAE**.



High-profile influencers, like **Ahmed Kasala**, who commands 73,800 TikTok followers, produce highly stylised clips featuring RSF slogans and mobilisation language which also serves to promote RSF’s information manipulation and deceptive narratives.

The pro-RSF ecosystem mirrors classic disinformation architectures which include centralised command accounts (typically large and verified anonymous or semi-anonymous entities), uniform behavioural signatures such as typical RSF mobilisation emojis including 🙌 (victory) and ❤️ (love), functioning as shorthand within RSF online communities, and persistent repost loops designed to manipulate

platform algorithms into treating coordinated posts as organic public sentiment.

Aforementioned RSF influencer, Ahmed Kasala incorporated the shorthand emojis commonly found in pro-RSF profile hashtags and comments directly into his TikTok biography.

Anonymous accounts such as @Tallin333 on TikTok and @Nate_Jone on X seed identical content across platforms, whilst pseudo-news channels like Shirazy TV on YouTube lend a veneer of journalistic credibility to RSF messaging.

Shirazy TV, a YouTube account established in 2018 in Egypt, originally positioned itself as a self-improvement and motivational channel focused on education and personal development. In January 2022, it began publishing videos featuring a presenter interviewing people on the streets. By July 2023, the channel commenced publishing popular videos from the war alongside pro-RSF content.

By October 2025, it had undergone complete transformation into an RSF-aligned propaganda node, exclusively publishing RSF battlefield clips under sensational titles, a technique identified in the DISARM Framework, whilst maintaining the original channel description, thereby creating a deceptive veneer of legitimacy and neutrality.

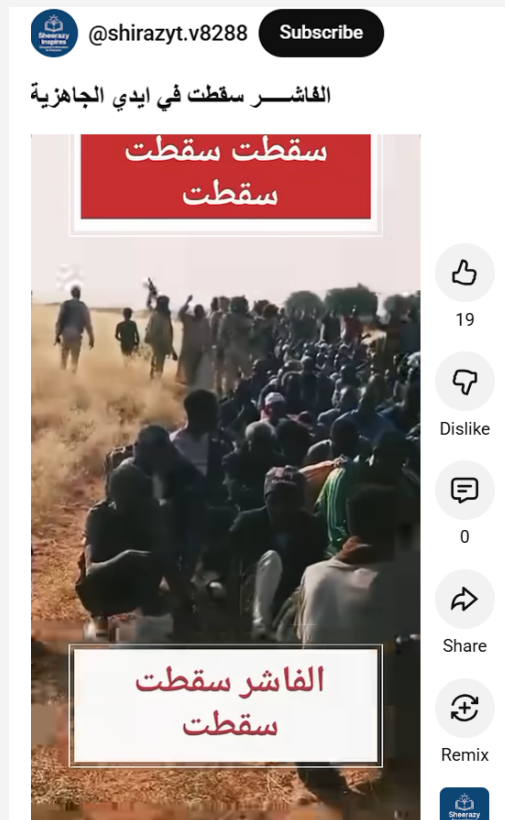
The channel posted a YouTube **video** posted on 26 October 2025 (titled in Arabic preview “El-Fasher falls to the readiness forces” but fully narrated in Arabic) which provides a textbook example of RSF-aligned digital propaganda using multilayered manipulation across several DISARM tactic areas.

The clip frames the fall of El-Fasher as a historic “liberation,” celebrating the defeat of the 6th Infantry Division and repeatedly asserting that “الجاهزية , قوات تأسيس / جيش both RSF-branded terms, have taken control “after two years of siege.”

The footage includes RSF fighters escorting detained civilians while mocking, taunting, and humiliating them, using slurs such as “قتلقيات”, a derogatory insult In RSF-aligned discourse.

Originally a term for someone who serves a ruler blindly and without ethical or national consideration, the word is used as a derogatory label for Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) officers and soldiers, becoming one of the new war-era slang terms that emerged on the battlefield and on social media to frame opponents as morally corrupted slaves and servants of power. The video glorifies RSF control while stripping detainees of dignity, reinforcing a triumphalist narrative of subjugation that extends the battlefield into the digital sphere.

Although branded as “Shirazy TV,” the channel



offers no verifiable information about ownership or location, and its upload pattern is consistent with known RSF-aligned propaganda channels.

It uses professional thumbnails and newsroom-style graphics but relies entirely on RSF-sourced imagery, suggesting a façade of legitimacy. Despite the channel’s branding as “Sheerazy Inspires,” with its promise of motivational lessons and self-development content, its wartime uploads bear no resemblance to this mission. Instead, they align with known pro-RSF propagandistic patterns: selective editing of battlefield footage, omission of civilian harm, recycled RSF-sourced clips, misleading thumbnails, and carefully cropped visuals that obscure context while dramatizing victory.

The channel’s lack of transparent ownership or editorial identity further strengthens indicators of deceptive identity, a key DISARM tactic frequently used by RSF-aligned networks.

The YouTube channel uses clear indicators such as mislabelled and selectively edited footage, packaging RSF battlefield clips as “liberation scenes” while omitting context about civilian casualties, forced displacement, or violations.

Several visual elements; recycled imagery, tightly cropped clips that obscure location details, and disconnected audio, indicate deliberate curation designed to dramatize RSF victory and obscure the violence against detainees. The posting fits a broader pattern of synchronised RSF-aligned content drops across platforms during the fall of El-Fasher.

Identical narratives, hashtags, and captions circulated on TikTok and X suggesting coordinated seeding. The video recycles the RSF vocabulary also used in TikTok and X bot networks identified by Beam Reports and other monitors in mid-2025.

Pro-SAF

An example of a high-reach influencer is @**dy9zjifmcs8** (Mustafa Bakhit Othman) on TikTok. With over 700K followers and extremely high engagement (57,000 likes and 8,752 shares on **one** video alone), he pushes intimidation and harassment narratives framed as patriotic commentary.

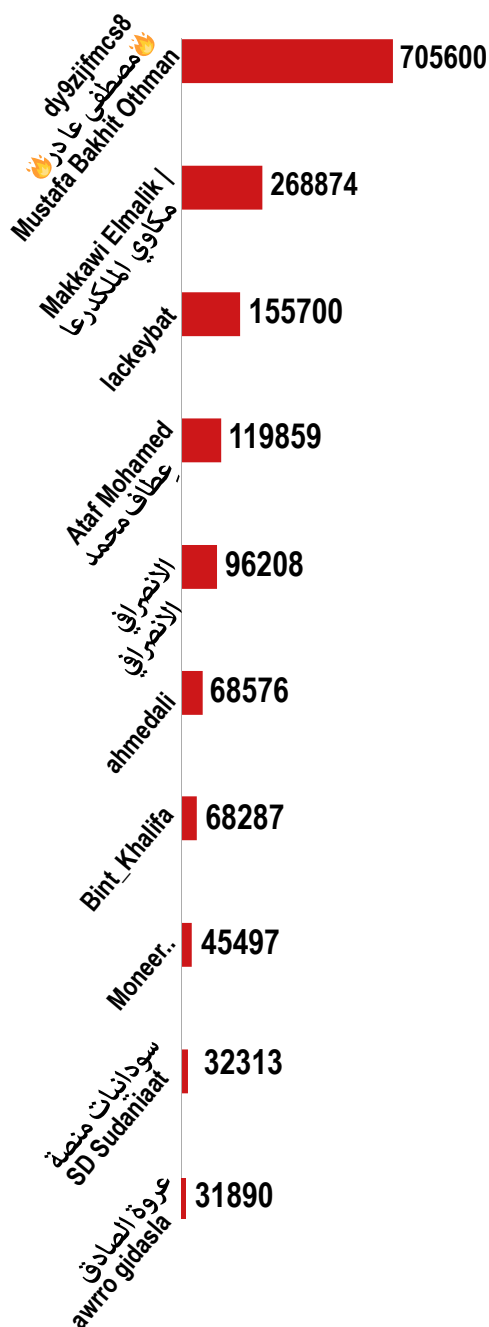
His videos are structured around emotional escalation, triumphal messaging, and humiliation of opposing factions. His profile declares he supports SAF and he uses hashtags such as (#SudaneseArmedForces, #SudaneseTikTok / #SudanCelebrities, #TheChinesePeopleAreUnstoppable) to aid in audience clustering.

The account plays the “relatable influencer” role in disinformation chains: it launders narratives and amplifies unverified or fabricated claims by mixing real conflict references with dramatized messaging.

A different type of actor is Makkawi Elmalik (@**mo_elmalik**) on X/Twitter (48,900 followers). His **content** is around anti-UAE interference and countering the Muslim Brotherhood=SAF narrative, among others. Unlike TikTok actors, his material leans on political analysis and long-form posts, framed as “insider knowledge.”

He reposts and quotes his own content to create loops of credibility and repetition, increasing content engagement. His role is ideological legitimization: reshaping rumors into policy-sounding commentary, embedding misinformation into elite political discourse, and reframing events in Darfur and Kordofan as part of external plots.

At the amplification layer actors like @**abotasneem249** (81,000 followers) **repackage** banned or de-platformed livestreamers such as Al-Insirafi into bite-sized, edited, high-engagement



The figure shows the top reaching flagged pro-SAF actors across monitored social media.



and highly emotional clips. This content is then pushed onto such anonymous network accounts to re-circulate material that was already removed from other platforms.

The behavior is synchronization: identical or near-identical videos appearing across multiple anonymous channels within short time windows and avoiding platform bans on reported accounts. These actors specialize in amplification and laundering banned material back into circulation, often framed in alarmist tones such as “Surrender of El-Fashir means the fall of Sudan.”

Sudaniaat (@sudaniaat), a semi-organizational media account with more than 16,000 followers, which reposts and **amplifies** threads casting these claims as politically engineered Western misinformation. In an example from October 2025,

Sudaniaat quote-tweets commentary dismissing the chemical-weapons allegations as a deliberate disinformation effort rather than a credible humanitarian concern. The post adopts the language of investigation and expertise while recycling unverifiable assertions and undermining scrutiny around the attacks.

The framing redirects blame away from SAF and toward “external agendas,” positions international reporting as suspect, and turns humanitarian warnings into partisan narratives. This use of quotation, curated reposting, and selective sourcing is a form of narrative laundering: amplifying unverified claims through a branded account, adding a veneer of legitimacy, and reducing public trust in independent monitoring and reporting.

The Sudanese Armed Forces operates with considerably less technical sophistication but compensates through volume, institutional authority, and diaspora mobilisation. SAF’s digital presence centres on its **official Facebook page** with 2.4 million followers, long-standing Facebook groups with tens or hundreds of thousands of members, and discreet Telegram channels.

Where the RSF deploys slick multimedia, SAF relies on written content, rudimentary deepfakes, and delayed official statements. The army lacks the same organisational skill in marketing and online presence, instead flooding timelines with repetitive battlefield updates, anti-RSF atrocity statements, and patriotic slogans that appear across multiple Facebook pages and X accounts.

What SAF lacks in sophistication, it attempts to make up for in emotional intensity and moral absolutism. Key influencers like Yasin Ahmed, with over 400,000 X followers, serve as central nodes in SAF’s digital mobilisation ecosystem.

His posts—characterised by confrontational rhetoric, graphic civilian testimony, and sustained tagging of international bodies like the UN, ICC, and Amnesty International—regularly achieve tens of thousands of views. In September, Ahmed circulated footage depicting RSF fighters humiliating civilians fleeing El Fasher, framing the RSF as perpetrators of systematic violence and demanding international accountability.

The post reached 48,200 people and generated hundreds of shares, energising SAF supporters by constructing a moral binary around “terrorists versus civilians” and directing international outrage toward the UAE and RSF.

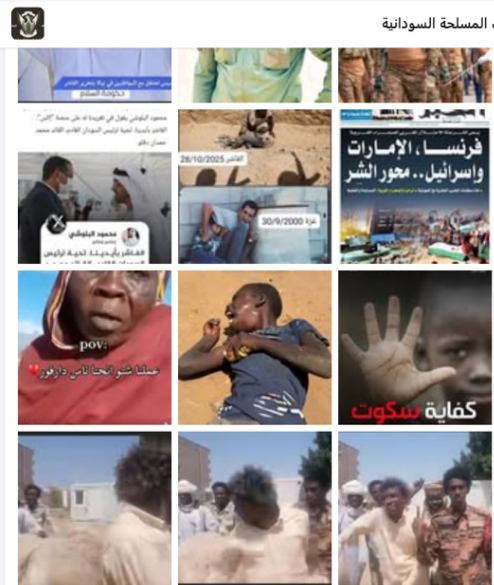
Other commentators such as **Al Insirafi** and others portray the SAF as the sole legitimate institution defending state sovereignty. SAF-aligned content emphasises existential threat, national unity, and resistance to “**foreign-backed militias**” often invoking broad collective identifiers such as “the people of Sudan” or “the nation.”

Their digital tactics rely heavily on volume, repetition across public accounts and closed groups, and perceived authority through long posts: the same battlefield updates, anti-RSF atrocities statements, and patriotic slogans appear across multiple Facebook pages and X accounts.

Additional SAF-aligned accounts employ different tactics. @Bit_Khalifa1417, an anonymous account with 71,000 followers on X, framed London-based protests against UAE involvement in Sudan as evidence of a global awakening, elevating a small demonstration into a geopolitical turning point. The post achieved over 119,400 views by leveraging anti-UAE slogans, crisis-framing hashtags, and strategic tagging that tapped into broader anti-UAE sentiment. Another account, @FCB60, mimicked open-source intelligence aesthetics by posting about a US Navy drone flight near Sudan, implicitly linking UAE facilities to American military surveillance during the El Fasher crisis.

The tweet garnered over 213,900 views by merging technical detail with politically charged insinuation, deepening public suspicion of foreign interference. SAF's narratives emphasise nationalism and the "war of dignity," portraying the army as Sudan's sole legitimate institution defending sovereignty against foreign-backed militias and Black African foreigners who the SAF narrative alleges are not authentically Sudanese

The messaging invokes broad collective identifiers—"the people of Sudan," "the nation"—and traditional symbols including religious appeals and established celebrities. SAF's digital strategy relies less on algorithmic optimisation than on dispersal through trusted personalities, crowd reposting, and diaspora sentiment, particularly in reaction to waves of UAE-based trolling and bot-driven harassment.



Public and private pro-SAF facebook groups



Examples of media circulated at the end of October in the public Facebook group – The Official Page of the Sudan Armed Forces.



Public and private pro-SAF facebook groups

Pro-SAF Facebook groups such as “الصفحة الرسمية للقوات المسلحة السودانية”, The Official Page of the Sudan Armed Forces” (not official) with over 203,000 members, are especially susceptible to misinformation because of their open, public structure and the ease with which users can join and post without moderation.

Facebook remains one of the most accessible platforms inside Sudan, particularly through Facebook Lite, which functions reliably on low bandwidth and older devices; this dramatically expands participation but also increases the

circulation of low-quality and manipulated content. In these groups, posts range from frontline updates cross-posted from Telegram, X, TikTok, WhatsApp and other Facebook pages, shared as screenshots, cropped images, memes, AI-generated visuals, and unverified clips supporting pro-SAF narratives. Some public groups are active, with tens or hundreds of posts a day, enabling false or outdated content spreading rapidly.



7. Narratives



Sudan's digital information environment operates as a systematically polluted ecosystem where both warring parties deploy organised disinformation and hate speech, forcing communities to consume toxic narratives that fuel social division, trauma, and violent reactive behaviour.

The sophisticated narrative control, deliberate ethnic targeting, and integration of violent language into public discourse demonstrate how digital platforms have become central to the hybrid warfare strategy being executed in Sudan. This domestic manipulation, observed through the social media monitoring during this period, is amplified through coordinated regional and international networks.

Sudan's information environment has become a critical battleground where the RSF and SAF deploy sophisticated disinformation campaigns to manipulate public opinion, mobilise support, and justify military operations.

As documented through various reports cited in this baseline assessment, and evidenced through social media monitoring and key informant interviews, these narratives systematically exploit ethnic, regional, and religious divisions, legitimising conflict and violence whilst shaping both domestic and international perceptions of the war and its

actors. This section examines the core narrative frameworks deployed by both parties, their strategic functions, and their amplification through regional and international media channels. Understanding these narratives is essential to comprehending how information warfare mobilises violence, paralyses resistance, and transforms political grievances into justifications for atrocity.

7.1 RSF Narratives: Marginalisation, Liberation, and Anti-Elite Rhetoric

The RSF's digital strategy centres on positioning itself as defender of Sudan's marginalised groups against their domination by "Northerners" and "northern elites". This narrative architecture combines anti-establishment messaging with systematic ethnic targeting and psychological intimidation.

The Marginalisation Narrative: Weaponizing Historical Grievances

A foundational pillar of the RSF information strategy centres on the systematic exploitation of Sudan's historical centre-periphery tensions. The RSF positions itself as the champion of Sudan's long-marginalised regions in particular Darfur, Kordofan, and other peripheral areas against what



it characterises as the entrenched “Khartoum elite” or “Riverain establishment.” This narrative framework transforms a military power struggle into an emancipatory project, reframing RSF operations as a liberation movement for historically excluded communities rather than the actions of an armed faction pursuing political and resource control.

The marginalisation narrative serves multiple strategic functions. It provides ideological legitimacy to RSF military operations, mobilises support amongst communities with genuine historical grievances, creates moral justification for violence against SAF and northern populations, and complicates international perceptions by presenting the conflict through a social-justice lens.

By anchoring its messaging in authentic experiences of regional neglect and exploitation under successive Khartoum governments, the RSF weaponises legitimate historical grievances whilst obscuring its own human rights violations and political and economic ambitions.

The RSF consistently frames the conflict as a struggle by marginalised regions against centralised power structures dominated by northern riverain elites. Before the war’s outbreak, RSF-aligned accounts spread narratives that the force was “liberating Khartoum” from the grip of traditional power holders. This rhetoric deliberately invokes decades of genuine regional grievance such as infrastructure neglect, lack of economic opportunity, political exclusion, and systematic underdevelopment of areas outside of main conurbations and positions RSF as the armed expression of peripheral resistance.

The hashtag #جاهزية_سرعة_حسم, #جاهزية / #Readiness_Speed_Completion functions as a mobilisation call demonstrating strength, commitment, and preparedness to confront northern domination.

This terminology appears consistently across pro-RSF digital content, serving as both rallying cry and identity marker for supporters. Hashtags such as #جاهزية_سرعة_حسم (Readiness_Speed_Completion) and #وطن_يا_جنود_دعامة (RSF_YourSoldiers_OhNation) create a linguistic ecosystem where military operations are reframed as acts of regional empowerment and collective self-defence. This narrative was clearly demonstrated in the widely circulated TikTok video posted on 29 October 2025 by the anonymous account @tallinn333, featuring RSF officer Commander Shiraz Khalid claiming to have captured a SAF colonel allegedly hiding among civilians in El-Fasher.

The detainee, shown disoriented and visibly malnourished, is framed as proof of SAF deception, reinforcing a narrative in which RSF protects marginalised Darfuri communities from predatory SAF forces. The video was removed from TikTok by the time this report was compiled RSF propaganda extensively deploys victimhood narratives that position peripheral communities as historical victims of northern oppression, creating emotional resonance whilst justifying present violence.

These narratives draw upon genuine historical experiences including the marginalisation of Darfur under successive governments, the extraction of resources from peripheral regions without equitable distribution, the concentration of development and infrastructure in central Sudan, and the exclusion of non-Arab and western Sudanese populations from political power.



By anchoring its messaging in these authentic grievances, RSF content creates a moral framework where violence against SAF becomes defensible as historical redress.

The narrative suggests that the current conflict represents not military aggression but rather the culmination of decades of accumulated injustice, marginalisation and exclusion from political processes and unfair resource distribution finally reaching a breaking point.

This framing proves particularly potent amongst younger populations in peripheral regions who have lived experience of state neglect and discrimination and is used to militarily recruit youth. At the same time, RSF propaganda actively whitewashes the group's origins in the Janjaweed militias responsible for atrocities and accusations of genocide in Darfur in 2003. By reframing itself as a liberation force rather than a continuation of an abusive paramilitary legacy, the RSF attempts to invert its historical role from perpetrator to protector of marginalised communities.

High-visibility RSF influencer Ahmed Kasala's (@ahmed.kasala87, 73.8K followers) 28 October 2025 **TikTok video** exemplifies how the marginalisation narrative operates in practice. The video directly addressed “ناس الشمالية”, (“the northerners”), a term functioning as shorthand for the riverine people of Sudan primarily living along the Nile River.

Within Sudanese online, and offline, political discourse, this linguistic choice immediately activates centre-periphery and elitism tensions positioning the speaker as the voice of the marginalised addressing the privileged. Kasala's content, which achieved 28,200 views with 1,174 likes and 126 comments, deployed hashtags combining battlefield updates #الدعم_السريع_يُحسم_الفضي_الجهاز / RSF_Resolves_the_Intelligence_Chaos) with identity markers #السودان_مشاهير_تيك_توك_سودانيز / Sudanese_TikTok_SudanCelebrities) and European country labels suggesting international validation.

The engagement patterns demonstrated strong resonance. Comments overwhelmingly featured RSF mobilisation emojis (✌️ for victory, ❤️ for solidarity), creating a discourse of triumphalism and collective identity rooted in regional belonging. The video's tone blended political agitation with humour through hashtags such as `#حل_ماله_الصيني_الشعب` (The_Chinese_People_Have_No_Solution), a seemingly incongruous reference that functions as inside-joke within Sudanese digital culture, softening the delivery of the divisive discourse whilst maintaining the underlying message that the conflict represents a historic reckoning between marginalised peripheries and northern elites.

This mixture of serious political messaging with cultural references makes the content more shareable and accessible, particularly to younger audiences who may be less receptive to overtly militarised propaganda.

RSF content systematically reframes military operations as acts of regional liberation rather than territorial conquest or ethnic attacks. This is again demonstrated in the 29 October 2025 TikTok video from anonymous account @tallinn333, featuring RSF officer Commander Shiraz Khalid claiming to have captured a SAF colonel in El-Fasher, demonstrates this narrative mechanism. The video's framing—showing a disoriented, malnourished detainee whilst emphasising the officer's Darfuri identity—transformed a military arrest into symbolic validation of peripheral power over the traditional military establishment.





Before TikTok removed the content, it achieved over 762,200 views, 11,000 likes, and 2,183 shares, demonstrating how marginalisation narratives resonate powerfully when attached to concrete battlefield developments. The triumphalist emojis and mobilisation hashtags (#حسم_سرعه_جاهزيه / Readiness_Speed_Decisiveness) created an emotionally charged atmosphere where the visual humiliation of a SAF officer becomes symbolic revenge for decades of marginalisation.

Comments celebrated not merely a military victory but what was perceived as the overturning of historical power hierarchies, with RSF forces capturing representatives of the Khartoum establishment.

The account itself, featuring a Niqabi woman as display photo, adds layers to the identity narrative, potentially signalling religious authenticity, female participation in the “liberation” struggle, or presenting regional cultural markers which are recognisable to target audiences.

The consistent posting pattern suggests coordination within broader RSF amplification networks, where anonymous accounts maintain identity-coded personas to build credibility within specific demographic segments.

The most insidious aspect of RSF’s marginalisation narrative lies in how it inverts responsibility for violence. Communities that genuinely experienced historical marginalisation are now positioned as collective perpetrators of atrocities through RSF actions, yet the narrative framework prevents acknowledgement of this transformation. When RSF forces engage in ethnic cleansing in El Geneina, mass rape in Darfur, or indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, the marginalisation narrative provides pre-emptive defence.

These actions are reframed as unfortunate excesses in a justified struggle, collateral damage in liberation, or false accusations from the very establishment that caused the marginalisation.

The systematic campaigns targeting specific communities before military operations demonstrate this inversion. Before RSF entered Al-Jazira, digital campaigns labelled local populations as either “RSF supporters” or “collaborators” (*Feloul*, a term used to suggest complicity with the Islamists and former regime), ultimately preparing psychological ground for violence against civilians. Yet within the marginalisation framework, these attacks are presented as responses to “elite” resistance or targeting of groups aligned with the oppressor establishment. The genuine history of marginalisation becomes a shield deflecting accountability for present atrocities.

Some RSF-aligned influencers promote more radical extensions of the marginalisation narrative, including separatist rhetoric suggesting Darfur should become a separate state or advocating for specific regional entities like the “River and Sea State.” These narratives circulate within RSF digital ecosystems, serving multiple purposes. They provide maximalist positions that make other RSF demands seem moderate by comparison. They test international and domestic reactions to potential fragmentation scenarios.

They appeal to the most aggrieved segments of peripheral populations who see no future in a unified Sudan under any governance structure. They create negotiating leverage by suggesting RSF has alternative options beyond participation in Sudanese national politics.

The now-suspended account @zainnalnaggy was captured for providing another illustration of RSF-aligned amplification tactics on X during the battle for El-Fashir. The user quote-tweeted @fahddalawaad (also suspended) and recycled the same celebratory RSF vocabulary “جيش تأسيس الوطني”, “النصر لنا” 🙌🙌, “المحور الغربي” and visual content used across RSF digital networks.



While @zainnalnaggy's content amplified battlefield triumphalism, one driver of this narrative within pro-RSF circles is @Nate_Jone (Imad), an alleged U.S.-based health professional, whose modest following (848) betrays his outsized narrative influence. His account mostly posts in English, and reshapes content of pro-RSF Sudanese, Emirati and American accounts.

Under the ABCDE framework, the actor cluster involves a now-suspended Sudanese account amplifying content from a foreign-based English-language voice that presents as neutral and humanitarian.

The behaviour consists of quote-tweeting and resurfacing triumphalist RSF battlefield claims (in **this** case, imagery and slogans celebrating RSF/Tasis advances on El Fasher).

The content centres on militarised depictions of El-Fasher assaults packaged with RSF mobilisation hashtags (#Tasis #Sudan_Triumphs #تأسيس , #ينتصر_السودان) reaffirming the militia's October 2025 messaging architecture. Although the degree of spread in the individual post was moderate (~1,984 views), the messaging fed into a far larger, synchronised RSF narrative space across TikTok, X, and pseudo-news YouTube channels, where identical frames circulate.

The effect was to normalise RSF operations as "civilian protection" and "humanitarian evacuation," reframing a major urban offensive against a besieged population as a stabilising, morally justified intervention.

Imad's messaging exemplifies narrative laundering: a medical, humanitarian, U.S.-based persona reframes RSF/Tasis operations as ethical governance while portraying SAF as "Muslim Brotherhood terrorists" using civilians as shields.

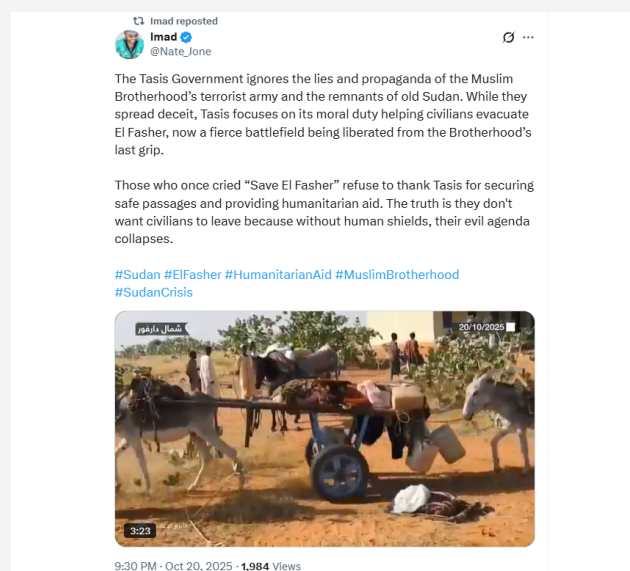
His posts also demonstrate amplification and coordination, mirroring timing and slogans used by suspended RSF-aligned networks and inserting them into English-language spaces that evade platform

moderation patterns affecting Sudanese accounts. Content manipulation is evident in selective cropping, euphemistic language such as "safe passages," "moral duty", and the inversion of responsibility for civilian suffering. Deceptive identity plays a central role, with a health professional façade providing credibility to overtly partisan messaging.

Finally, the suspension of amplifiers like @zainnalnaggy alongside the continued activity of diaspora influencers like @Nate_Jone show how information suppression operates unevenly: enforcement disrupts some RSF-aligned nodes while others, especially those abroad and using neutral-seeming identities, continue the narrative cycle, making diaspora-based identity laundering a resilient tactic in RSF's digital propaganda network.

Similarly, Emirati strategic affairs expert Amjad Taha amplified this framing on 30 October 2025 with a post viewed over 176,700 times, showing video content that portrayed SAF as the Muslim Brotherhood bombing Sudanese civilians and causing starvation.

The emotionally manipulative audio-visual content garnered 676 reposts and 1,600 likes, demonstrating how high-reach influencers amplify RSF narratives through content manipulation. According to the DISARM Framework, the video has narrative laundering associated with a known pro-RSF narrative, with alteration to content to fit a narrative and amplify through influencers with high reach.





Internationally, the marginalisation narrative allows RSF to position itself within global discourses around social justice, anti-colonialism, and protection of minorities. International audiences unfamiliar with Sudanese specifics but attentive to frameworks of historical injustice, structural marginalisation, and resistance to oppression may find RSF messaging superficially compelling when presented through human-rights terminology.

RSF-aligned diaspora voices and sympathetic international commentators can reframe the conflict as a struggle between marginalised communities seeking self-determination and a central government

representing historical oppressor classes. This framing complicates international responses, potentially creating hesitancy to condemn RSF actions too forcefully lest this be perceived as siding with traditional elites against marginalised peoples.

The presence of diaspora-based accounts like @Nate_Jone (Imad), presenting as U.S.-based health professional with humanitarian concerns whilst amplifying RSF battlefield triumphalism, demonstrates this internationalisation strategy.

By using English-language content, neutral humanitarian framing, and positioning RSF operations as “civilian protection” and “safe passage” provision, such accounts perform narrative laundering for international audiences who may lack context to recognise RSF propaganda frameworks.

Anti-Elite narrative

Complementing and intertwining with the marginalisation discourse, the RSF’s anti-elite narrative functions as a targeted demolition of the SAF’s legitimacy by systematically reframing SAF not as a national institution but as the armed wing of a parasitic ruling class. This narrative strand portrays SAF as the military instrument of “Khartoum elites,” “riverain establishment,” or simply “Khartoum terrorists” which is terminology deliberately designed to strip the army of its national character and recast it as a factional force protecting narrow class interests against the broader Sudanese population.

The anti-elite framing serves multiple strategic purposes within RSF’s information architecture. It delegitimises SAF’s claim to represent national sovereignty and state authority, transforming the conflict from rebellion against legitimate government into a struggle between competing visions of Sudan’s future. It mobilises class resentment alongside regional grievances, expanding RSF’s potential support base to include urban poor and economically frustrated populations across Sudan.



It provides rhetorical justification for attacks on state institutions, government facilities, and civilian infrastructure by framing these not as attacks on national assets but rather as targeting the elite's power structures.

Perhaps most significantly, it creates moral permission for violence against SAF personnel and SAF-aligned civilians by dehumanising them as defenders of an exploitative system rather than fellow citizens.

The anti-elite narrative operates through consistent linguistic patterns, symbolic associations, and strategic amplification across digital platforms. It relies heavily on emotional appeals rooted in genuine economic frustrations, wealth disparities, and perceptions of corruption amongst Sudan's political and military establishment.

By anchoring its messaging in authentic popular anger about elite privilege and state failure, RSF constructs a narrative framework that resonates with broad segments of Sudanese society whilst obscuring RSF leadership's own accumulation of wealth and power.

The anti-elite narrative operates partly through the systematic usage of derogatory terminology that has become integrated into Sudanese political and civil discourse. Terms like "Kizan" (نازيك), a derogatory reference to Islamists that has expanded to encompass broader SAF-aligned networks, function as linguistic markers that simultaneously identify targets and delegitimise them.

By labelling opponents as "Kizan," RSF-aligned accounts invoke associations with the defunct Bashir regime, Islamist political networks, and religious authoritarianism, creating guilt-by-association even when targeted individuals or groups have no connection to Islamist movements.

"Feloul" (فلول — remnants or leftovers) serves similar functions, suggesting that SAF supporters represent residual elements of the Bashir regime clinging to privilege rather than legitimate political actors.

The term carries connotations of irrelevance, illegitimacy, and historical obsolescence, implying that supporting SAF means defending a dying order rather than engaging in genuine political contestation. This terminology appears consistently in RSF content, comments sections, and hashtag campaigns, creating an environment where simply expressing pro-SAF views or questioning RSF actions triggers labelling as "Faloul" or "Kizan" with attendant harassment and delegitimisation.

The integration of this terminology into everyday digital discourse demonstrates the narrative's success in shaping linguistic norms. What began as targeted political labels have become generalised terms of abuse, deployed even in contexts unrelated to specific political alignments. This linguistic shift reflects how the anti-elite narrative has penetrated broader Sudanese digital culture, normalising the association between SAF support and elite privilege whilst making neutral or pro-SAF positions socially costly to express.

The **8 October 2025 post** by TV presenter @TsabihAli exemplifies this conflation strategy. The content described scenes in Omdurman as celebrations by "Islamist battalions" using the terminology جيش الإخوان "the army of the Muslim Brotherhood" and hashtags linking SAF to Hamas and international ارهابي_تنظيم_الاسلامية_الحركة terrorism / The_Islamic_Movement_Is_a_Terrorist_Organization. This framing achieved over 52,700 views, demonstrating substantial reach for content that simultaneously deployed anti-elite messaging (SAF as partisan rather than national) and anti-Islamist framing (SAF as religious extremist organisation).

A report by Beam Reports published 19th November 2025 identifies Amjad Taha as the architect of a coordinated disinformation campaign designed to deflect international attention from RSF atrocities in El Fasher by fabricating claims of Islamist extremist attacks on Christians in Sudan.



Taha's account posted unsubstantiated allegations including claims that Britain was granting citizenship to Sudanese jihadists whilst Christians were being slaughtered, and that the "Sudanese Islamic Army" had killed two million Christians none supported by credible sources.

As RSF seized El Fasher, he alleged that "Islamist Sudanese army officers under the Muslim Brotherhood" had committed grotesque atrocities, wore Turkish uniforms, and issued passports to Hamas terrorists, providing no evidence.

His network amplified these narratives using manipulated imagery including AI-generated content and photographs from unrelated contexts in Chad and Mali whilst misappropriating genuine satellite evidence of RSF massacres to falsely claim they documented "Christian killings by Islamists."

The campaign coordinated with Israeli accounts and far-right European figures to promote anti-Islam messaging whilst simultaneously portraying the UAE as a model of religious tolerance.

RSF's anti-elite messaging frequently incorporates conspiracy theories suggesting that Sudanese elites actively collaborate with foreign powers to maintain dominance and suppress peripheral empowerment.

These narratives portray elite networks as willing

to sacrifice national sovereignty to preserve their privileged positions, framing them as comprador class serving external interests rather than authentic national leadership. Content circulated by accounts such as @bambino199 🍌🍌 exemplifies this conspiracy dimension.

The 28 October 2025 video, which reached 611,700 users, amplified claims that peace agreements constitute fraud orchestrated by elite networks working with foreign powers to divide Sudan whilst preserving their dominance in whatever entity emerges. The framing suggested that the "four peace partners" secretly conspire to partition Sudan, with SAF leadership complicit in this alleged conspiracy because partition would allow elites to maintain control over riverain Sudan even whilst losing peripheral territories.

The actor here is an anonymous amplification network and pseudo-news TikTok accounts that mask coordination behind seemingly organic content aggregation. Their behaviour consists of scraping livestreams, editing them out of context, and reposting them in high-velocity cycles timed to major battlefield events such as the fall of El-Fasher.





The content is deliberately manipulative: clips are trimmed to remove nuance and captions are framed to exaggerate crisis. The degree of spread is high, as TikTok's algorithm favours short-form, emotionally charged videos, pushing these clips into For You Feeds where they circulate far beyond the original audience. The effect is to erode trust in SAF, inflame fears of national fragmentation, and reinforce RSF's narratives.

These types of posts exemplify narrative laundering, in which fringe livestream opinions are amplified, with identical videos circulating across dozens of anonymous TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Facebook Reels accounts within minutes, behaviour characteristic of a synchronised content farm. Content manipulation is evident in the addition of sensational text banners warning of imminent division ("انقسام السودان لدولتين").

These techniques create the illusion of inevitability, transforming isolated claims from influencers into a broader narrative of conspiracy. Finally, elements of information suppression appear in the way RSF-aligned networks flood TikTok with repurposed livestream segments, drowning out fact-checked or humanitarian-positioned content and pushing algorithmic visibility toward fear-based messaging.

Psychological Intimidation

Beyond ideological framing and political narratives, the Rapid Support Forces deploy systematic psychological intimidation as a core component of their information warfare strategy.

This dimension of RSF's digital operations functions to paralyse resistance, accelerate territorial control, and create climates of fear that facilitate military objectives whilst minimising actual combat. Psychological intimidation operates through carefully orchestrated campaigns that precede, accompany, and follow military operations, transforming digital platforms into instruments of terror that extend RSF's coercive reach far beyond physical battlefields.

The psychological intimidation narrative distinguishes

itself from other RSF information tactics through its explicit focus on generating fear, hopelessness, and surrender rather than ideological persuasion or political legitimisation.

Whilst marginalisation and anti-elite narratives seek to win hearts and minds by offering liberation frameworks, psychological intimidation seeks to break spirits and crush resistance by demonstrating RSF's overwhelming power, inevitability of its victory, and futility of opposition. This approach treats information not as means of persuasion but as weapon of psychological warfare designed to achieve military effects through cognitive and emotional impact.

The systematic nature of RSF's psychological intimidation; its timing relative to military operations, its targeting of specific populations, its calibrated escalation of threatening content, and its integration with actual violence on the ground demonstrates sophisticated understanding of how information operations can amplify kinetic military effects.

By generating fear that exceeds the actual military threat, psychological intimidation achieves strategic effects disproportionate to RSF's material capabilities, effectively multiplying force through manipulation of perception and emotion.

RSF deploys psychological intimidation campaigns in advance of military operations to soften targets by generating panic, encouraging civilian flight, and undermining defender morale.

This pre-assault information warfare transforms upcoming battles by creating psychological conditions favourable to RSF victory before fighting commences. Populations in targeted areas receive waves of threatening content suggesting imminent attack, inevitable defeat, and terrible consequences for those who remain or resist.



The interview data reveals this pattern explicitly with one stakeholder noting “The RSF uses propaganda to intimidate the SAF and the local civilian population in targeted areas, encouraging them to leave their positions, often ahead of a military takeover.” This advance intimidation serves multiple military purposes.

Civilian flight reduces the population that might support defenders, provide intelligence about RSF movements, or serve as witnesses to RSF conduct during and after military operations. Defender demoralisation weakens military effectiveness by creating expectation of defeat and questioning the purpose of resistance. The psychological impact of believing attack is imminent and defeat inevitable can cause defensive collapse even when military balance might favour defenders.

El-Fasher provides a clear example of this systematic pre-assault intimidation. In the months preceding intensified RSF operations against the city, digital platforms carried waves of content depicting RSF strength, SAF weakness, and the inevitability of El-Fasher’s fall. Content emphasised RSF’s battlefield momentum elsewhere, showed captured SAF personnel, displayed advanced weapons systems allegedly in RSF possession, and featured RSF commanders confidently predicting imminent victory.

This drumbeat of intimidating content aimed to create self-fulfilling prophecy: if El-Fasher’s defenders and population could be convinced defeat was inevitable, their demoralisation and flight would make that defeat materially more likely.

A post collected on Meltwater on 9 September 2025 by a pro-SAF influencer X account illustrates this intimidation dynamic clearly. The user posted a video showing RSF forces filming themselves humiliating El-Fasher residents attempting to flee the siege, framing the footage with descriptors such as “torture, humiliation, degradation,” and signalling that escape would be met with violence.

The post was viewed 48,300 times and drew more than 400 engagements circulated through

hashtags including #rapidsupportisterroristmilitia, الكرامة_حرب # , السودان_المسلحة_القوات (#WarofDignity and #SAF) placing it inside a wider network of high-emotion wartime discourse.

While the post positions RSF as brutal aggressors rather than victorious liberators, it nevertheless amplifies fear, uncertainty, and powerlessness, reinforcing the perception that civilians have limited choices and that the city is already beyond safety or resistance. This form of digital humiliation and warning content functions as psychological pressure: even when shared by SAF-aligned users as evidence of RSF brutality, the effect is still intimidation, reduced trust, and further demoralisation among local populations.

A central element of RSF’s psychological intimidation involves projecting images of overwhelming military power and inevitable victory. Content systematically emphasises RSF’s numbers, weaponry, territorial gains, and battlefield successes whilst downplaying or ignoring setbacks and challenges.

This curated representation of RSF capability aims to generate perception that resistance is futile because RSF possesses insurmountable advantages. The mobilisation slogan “Jahzia” (جاهزية - Readiness) functions partly as intimidation tool, suggesting that RSF maintains constant battle-readiness and can deploy overwhelming force at will. Videos and images showing large formations of RSF fighters, convoys of military vehicles, and stockpiles of weapons circulate extensively across TikTok, X, and Facebook.

Even before Abu Lolo became known, through the international media coverage of his video boasting about killing two thousand people and his intention to kill more, he was a popular figure with youth on social media platforms, infamous for his sword and executions he conducted with the sword.

According to one interview, the RSF are trying to promote more of their commanders to be like Abo Lulo and to threaten populations that they are coming. These displays of force target both opponents and neutral populations, conveying



message that RSF has reached critical mass where its military superiority has become decisive. The actual military balance—which includes significant SAF advantages in certain capabilities, RSF’s struggles in some operational theatres, and the fundamentally contested nature of the conflict—disappears within content ecosystems saturated with imagery of RSF strength.

On October 28, 2025, a pro-RSF video disseminating hate speech and inciting violence was published on TikTok by the account **hadath_mubashir**, which has 188.9K followers and 736K likes. At the time of monitoring, this specific video received more than 22,000 likes, 2,739 comments, 4,735 bookmarks and 4,855 shares. It showed a live video call with RSF supporters, including Abu Lulo, and featured three men speaking to him. They boasted about ‘finishing Falangati,’ with Abu Lolo claiming he had lost count after killing more than 2,000 and expecting to kill more in the coming days.

RSF’s psychological intimidation includes explicit deployment of gendered violence threats designed to terrorise specific populations whilst mobilising others. The interview data documents a particularly chilling example: “Hate speech includes explicit

gendered threats, such as a video of a female RSF fighter (Commander Shiraz Khalid) threatening Northern Sudan women to ‘improve the bloodline’.”

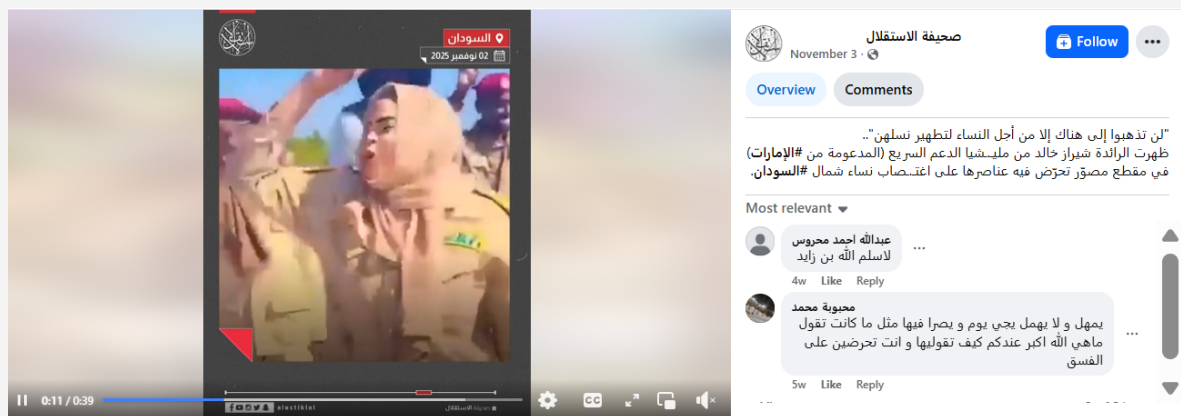
This content represents weaponisation of sexual violence fears, using explicit threats of mass rape framed through racist and eugenicist language to intimidate northern Sudanese communities whilst signalling RSF’s intentions.

Although Shiraz Khalid’s attack on Northern state hate speech video was removed from many Sudanese ecosystem accounts by the end of October, it was still circulating in regional media during the analysis phase of this report. In an Instagram **post** by a Turkey based newspaper named EEstiklal, the **video** received 440 likes. On Facebook, the video was cross-posted and received 10,000 views.

The specific framing—“improving the bloodline”—adds layers of psychological terror beyond the sexual violence threat itself. It suggests systematic rather than opportunistic sexual violence, frames potential mass rape as deliberate policy with ideological justification, invokes racist hierarchies that position northern

Sudanese women as targets for racial degradation, and transforms sexual violence from war crime into proclaimed programme of ethnic and racial transformation. The use of a female RSF fighter to deliver these threats adds additional psychological complexity, potentially serving to demonstrate that even women within RSF embrace this violence, suggesting total organisational commitment to these terror tactics.

On 29 October, an anonymous African influencer with more than 300,000 followers posted on X: “Imagine being the only survivor among those killed at a field in El Fasher...”, followed by the claim that “There’s an ongoing genocide in Sudan sponsored by the UAE through the RSF.” The post included an emotionally charged image of a distressed woman (likely AI-generated or drawn from a different conflict) yet presented as an El-Fasher survivor.



Despite lack of verification, the post achieved rapid traction (15.7k views, 153 reshares, 302 likes, 21 comments, 17 bookmarks), demonstrating how high-emotion manipulated media and narratives travel far beyond Sudanese networks when amplified by large external accounts.

The content relied on affective storytelling rather than evidence, pairing speculative atrocity framing with imagery designed to evoke trauma, grief, and moral shock. This incident reflects the impact of the broader RSF-aligned psychological warfare tactics documented.

The result is an information environment where unverified images shape global understanding of atrocity, fear travels faster than fact, and digital war is fought as much through affect and spectacle as through material force.

Actors have also weaponised identity theft, femininity, and digital aesthetics to shape political discourse across borders. A BBC **investigation** (Oct 2025) uncovered more than 100 coordinated fake social-media accounts impersonating Somali Muslim women without their knowledge or consent. The operators stole photos from real women across Somalia and the diaspora and used them to create fabricated personas on X, Facebook, and TikTok.

This was clear in one example found through dark social monitoring; the account **@Tallinn333** on TikTok had a Niqab wearing woman as their display photo in October 2025) that posted clipped videos of politically charged messages.

These accounts consistently, amplified pro-RSF narratives related to the Sudan war. The women whose images were stolen told the BBC they had never seen the accounts, highlighting the gendered dimension of this tactic: women's bodies and identities were instrumentalised to create trustworthy-looking avatars capable of bypassing audience scepticism. The article, which was published in Arabic, was translated and **shared** by **@SudaneseEcho**, an anonymous account with 12.6k followers on X, garnering 44.9k views. The TikTok account **@Tallinn333** was eventually removed a few days after the content was restricted in November, likely due to platform moderation or advocates reporting against the shared media.





7.2 SAF Narratives: Nationalism, Dignity, and the Defence of the Homeland

The SAF and their allied networks have constructed an elaborate information ecosystem centred on portraying SAF as the legitimate defender of Sudan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national identity against foreign-backed and foreign mercenary forces.

This narrative architecture positions the conflict not as internal power struggle but as existential battle for Sudan's survival as unified nation-state. Through systematic deployment of nationalist symbolism, religious appeals, and dignity-focused framing, SAF-aligned actors seek to mobilise popular support, legitimise military operations, and establish SAF as the sole institution capable of preserving Sudan's existence against fragmentation and foreign domination.

The SAF narrative strategy differs fundamentally from RSF's approach in both tone and substance. Where RSF emphasises liberation, marginalisation, and anti-elite revolution, SAF invokes tradition, continuity, institutional authority, and national preservation.

Where RSF positions itself as insurgent force overturning unjust hierarchies, SAF presents itself as custodian of national sovereignty defending established order against chaos, foreign interference and foreigners, specifically Black Africans who settled in Sudan. This divergence reflects the actors' different relationships to state institutions: RSF operates as challenger seeking to overturn or capture state power, whilst SAF maintains its position as inheritor of state military tradition requiring defence of its institutional legitimacy.

The sophistication of SAF's information strategy lies in its calibrated messaging across different audience segments. For nationalist-minded populations, SAF offers defence of sovereignty and territorial integrity. For religious conservatives, it provides protection of Islamic identity and values. For former revolutionary activists disillusioned

with RSF's violence, it presents pathway to civilian democratic transition once the "mercenary threat" is eliminated. For international audiences, it frames the conflict through counterterrorism and anti-foreign interference lenses that resonate with global security concerns. This multi-layered approach allows SAF to construct broad coalition despite its own problematic history and present conduct.

The War of Dignity: Existential Framing and National Honour

The "War of Dignity" *عمارة الكرامة* narrative represents the emotional and ideological core of SAF's information strategy, transforming military operations into moral crusade for national honour and self-respect.

This framing operates on multiple psychological levels. It elevates the conflict from political-military competition into civilisational struggle where Sudan's very essence faces existential threat while mobilising populations through appeals to honour, a deeply resonant concept in Sudanese culture, positioning military service and civilian support as matters of personal and collective dignity.

It also creates moral permission structure for accepting the war's hardships by framing suffering as necessary price for maintaining national honour rather than as consequence of elite power struggles, and establishes clear moral boundaries where supporting SAF becomes equated with defending dignity whilst opposing SAF or supporting RSF becomes shameful betrayal.

The dignity framing proves particularly powerful because it speaks to genuine popular frustrations about Sudan's international marginalisation, economic collapse, and perceived humiliation by regional powers.

When SAF-aligned content frames the war as struggle to prevent Sudan's partition, to resist foreign domination and influence, or to maintain sovereignty against external interference, these messages resonate with populations who have witnessed

Sudan's declining regional influence, economic subjugation to international financial institutions, and apparent manipulation by wealthier Gulf states.

The dignity narrative transforms these diffuse frustrations into concrete motivation for supporting SAF as the institution defending against further humiliation.

An X user with over 48,000 followers posted on 2 September 2025 exemplifies this dignity-focused framing. The content claimed that Darfur and Kordofan have suffered systematic genocide إبادة ممنهجة at RSF hands, allegedly backed by the UAE.

The narrative positioned atrocities as proof that the war constitutes struggle for dignity, sovereignty, and national survival. Hashtags السودان_ينتصر, # معركة_الكرامة, # الامارات_تقتل_السودانيين, # Sudan_Triumphs, # Battle_of_Dignity, # UAEIsKillingSudanese, # UAESponsorsTerrorism) tied domestic conflict to broader geopolitical critique, positioning SAF as defender of Sudan against predatory international forces. The post reached 5,726 views with 7 reshares and 87 likes, demonstrating moderate but consistent engagement with dignity-focused messaging.

Central to the dignity narrative is systematic

characterisation of RSF as foreign mercenary force rather than Sudanese faction, thereby framing the conflict as national defence against external invasion rather than civil war.

SAF-aligned content relentlessly emphasises RSF's alleged foreign composition, its recruitment of fighters from Chad, Niger, Mali, and other Sahel countries, its dependence on UAE financial and logistical support, and its alleged use of non-Sudanese commanders and technical experts and the alleged foreignness of its Sudanese component – the RSF fighters, according to this narrative, are largely comprised of عرب الشتات or “the scattered or dispersed Arabs” – Arabs from African countries who settled in Sudan and are trying to establish a homeland in Sudan.

Hemedti, for example, is often depicted as a member of this community and it is a widely circulated narrative amongst SAF supporters that Hemedti was allegedly born in Chad. This mercenary framing serves multiple strategic purposes. First, it delegitimises RSF by stripping it of nationalist credentials. If RSF consists primarily of foreign mercenaries pursuing foreign agendas, then fighting against RSF becomes patriotic duty rather than fratricidal violence. Second, the mercenary framing provides explanation for RSF's military capabilities that avoids acknowledging SAF's own weaknesses.

Rather than confronting uncomfortable questions about why a supposedly superior national army struggles against non-state forces, the narrative suggests that RSF's effectiveness stems from foreign backing, advanced foreign weapons, and foreign military expertise. This explanation preserves SAF's status and dignity by attributing its difficulties to overwhelming foreign intervention rather than institutional failings.

Third, framing RSF as foreign mercenaries positions support for RSF as treason rather than as legitimate political choice. Sudanese who support or sympathise with RSF become collaborators with foreign forces seeking to destroy Sudan. This reframing intensifies social pressure against RSF support by transforming it from political position into betrayal of nation.





The dignity-mercenary nexus appears consistently in SAF content. Posts describe RSF as “foreign militias,” “invading mercenaries,” or “UAE proxy forces” rather than using terminology suggesting domestic origin. Visual content emphasises alleged foreign fighters amongst captured RSF personnel, with particular attention to non-Arab African physical features or foreign identity documents. The repetition creates perception that RSF’s Sudanese composition is minimal or merely superficial facade for fundamentally foreign force.

The dignity narrative operates powerfully through cultural frameworks of honour and shame that resonate deeply in Sudanese society. Supporting SAF becomes framed as honourable defence of homeland, family, and collective dignity, whilst remaining neutral or supporting RSF becomes shameful abandonment of national duty.

This honour-shame dynamic generates intense social pressure, particularly among male populations where honour codes connect closely to protector roles and military service. SAF-aligned content frequently features appeals to masculine honour, positioning military service as ultimate expression of manhood and dignity. Men who fight for SAF are celebrated as heroes defending national honour, whilst those who flee, remain neutral, or support RSF face implicit or explicit accusations of cowardice and shame. This gendered mobilisation proves particularly effective in contexts where social status and personal identity connect closely to demonstrations of courage and commitment to collective defence.

The shame dimension targets particularly those who advocate for peace, neutrality, or compromise. Within the dignity framework, such positions become reframed as cowardly capitulation that would leave Sudan’s honour permanently compromised.

Peace negotiations or ceasefires are portrayed not as pragmatic conflict resolution but as shameful surrender that would legitimise foreign intervention and mercenary occupation. This framing makes it socially costly to advocate for diplomatic resolution, contributing to conflict perpetuation by establishing that accepting any outcome short of total victory would constitute unacceptable humiliation.

Al-Qawmiyyah: Nationalism and Traditional Symbolism

The concept of *al-Qawmiyyah* (nationalism) functions as ideological backbone of SAF’s messaging, connecting Sudan’s present struggle to longer histories of Arab and African nationalism, anti-colonial resistance, and African liberation movements. SAF-aligned content systematically deploys nationalist symbolism that positions the army as inheritor and defender of Sudan’s national project against forces of fragmentation, foreign domination, and identity dissolution.

SAF influencers consistently use traditional nationalist symbols such as the Sudanese flag which appears prominently in visual content, national anthems and patriotic songs provide audio backgrounds for videos, historical references to Sudanese resistance against colonialism and foreign invasion create narrative continuity between past and present, and appeals to national unity and territorial integrity position SAF as guardian of Sudan’s existence as coherent nation-state.

This symbolic vocabulary creates emotional resonance with audiences socialised into nationalist frameworks through education systems and state media that historically emphasised these themes.



An X user with more than 48000 followers posted on 2 September 2025, claims that Darfur and Kordofan have suffered systemic genocide “إبادة ممنهجة” at the hands of the RSF, allegedly backed by the UAE.

The narrative here is explicit: atrocities committed by RSF prove that the war is one of dignity, sovereignty, and national survival. Hashtags such as *#السودان_يُنتصر* *#معركة_الكرامة* *#الامارات_تقتل_السودانيين* *#الامارات_ترعى_الارهاب* (*#Battle_of_Dignity#Sudan_Triumphs#UAEIsKillingSudanese#UAESponsorsTerrorism*) tie domestic conflict to a broader geopolitical critique, positioning SAF as the defender of Sudan against predatory international forces. The post reached 5726 and was reshared 7 times and liked 87 times.

Complementing secular nationalism, SAF-aligned messaging extensively deploys religious symbolism and appeals to Islamic authority to legitimise military operations and mobilise support. Influencers supporting SAF frequently invoke religious figures, use

Quranic verses and Hadith to justify fighting, frame the conflict as defence of Islamic values against godless mercenaries, and present SAF as protector of Sudan’s Islamic character and institutions. This religious dimension manifests through multiple channels.

Religious scholars and imams aligned with SAF issue fatwas declaring support for the army as religious duty and characterising RSF as forces of *fitna* (sedition) requiring resistance. Content features soldiers performing prayers before battles, religious ceremonies blessing military units, and emphasis on SAF’s respect for Islamic sites and scholars in contrast to alleged RSF attacks on mosques and religious institutions. The visual vocabulary consistently includes Islamic symbols, Quranic calligraphy, and religious terminology that positions SAF within frameworks of Islamic legitimacy.

ASAF-aligned religious-warfare narrative, specifically framing the conflict as targeting Christians and churches, was **posted** by Visegrad24, a global

news aggregator based in Poland with 1.4 million followers, on October 22, 2025. The post included a video that opens with audio of Abdel Fattah al-Burhan while footage of a building engulfed in flames plays. It then shows a group of young males who appear to be protesting, overlaid with the caption: “October 7, a new day of celebration.” The video, with 87.9K views, 396 reposts, 951 likes, 53 comments, and 78 bookmarks, concludes with a Western reporter saying that Christians are being flown out of Sudan due to persecution.

The content falls under content and narrative laundering and miscontextualization. This tactic introduces an unverified claim into the information ecosystem and amplifies it through an international platform (Visegrad24), recasting the Sudan conflict in religious-civilizational terms and reframes recycled and reassembled media without sourcing, as evidence of a coordinated persecution campaign.

This is a common disinformation method in Sudan-related content: combining fragments to fabricate a narrative arc. Key indicators include mislabelled footage and misleading captions, where generic visuals are framed as proof of Christian persecution.

The post also draws on strategic reuse of prior narratives circulating in the ecosystem, including the same religious-warfare tropes that appeared in content by pro-RSF accounts such as journalist **Tasabih Mubarak**. This repetition shows how narratives migrate and evolve across actors and platforms: domestic-origin claims are repackaged for international audiences, reinforcing the same storyline through different voices and contexts. SAF-aligned content also extensively features traditional community leaders, tribal authorities, and local administration figures expressing support for the army. This deployment of traditional authority serves to root SAF’s legitimacy in indigenous social structures rather than merely state institutions.

When tribal leaders, village elders, and community authorities endorse SAF, this signals to their communities that supporting the army aligns with local traditions and community interests rather than representing imposition from distant Khartoum.

The emphasis on traditional authority also serves SAF's attempt to contest RSF's peripheral and anti-elite framing. By demonstrating that traditional leaders from Darfur, Kordofan, and other peripheral regions support SAF, the messaging challenges RSF's claim to represent peripheral interests against central domination. The implicit argument suggests that authentic leadership is rooted in traditional community structures rather than armed militia networks which sides with SAF, positioning RSF as disruptor of traditional order rather than representative of peripheral populations.

Systematic Denial of SAF Responsibility for Civilian Harm

A critical component of SAF's information strategy involves systematic denial, minimisation, or deflection of responsibility for civilian casualties and infrastructure destruction resulting from SAF operations. Despite extensive documentation of SAF aerial bombardment of residential areas, shelling of civilian neighbourhoods, and infrastructure attacks that have caused significant civilian harm, SAF-aligned content maintains consistent narrative that the army targets only RSF military positions with precision whilst RSF bears responsibility for civilian casualties.

An interviewee explicitly documents this pattern. "Disinformation is heavily used to cover up the impact of SAF actions on civilians, often by claiming that they are only targeting RSF positions, and any resulting bombing in residential areas is the RSF's fault." This systematic deflection serves multiple functions in SAF's information warfare. It protects SAF's claim to legitimate state authority by avoiding acknowledgement of violations of international humanitarian law. It maintains moral high ground by positioning SAF as protector of civilians against RSF aggression rather than as parallel perpetrator

of violence against civilian populations.

It deflects international criticism and potential accountability mechanisms by denying the factual basis for allegations of SAF war crimes. It maintains domestic support by preventing erosion of SAF's legitimacy that would result from widespread acknowledgement of civilian harm caused by army operations.

The deflection mechanisms operate through several consistent patterns. When civilian casualties from aerial bombardment or artillery shelling become undeniable—documented through videos, photographs, or survivor testimonies—SAF-aligned accounts attribute these outcomes to RSF actions through various explanatory frameworks such as claiming RSF deliberately positions military assets in civilian areas to use populations as human shields, suggesting RSF stages false flag attacks on civilian areas to generate international condemnation of SAF, asserting that civilian casualties result from RSF weapons rather than SAF operations even when evidence clearly indicates aerial bombardment or artillery from SAF-controlled positions, or arguing that any civilian presence in areas SAF identifies as military targets constitutes voluntary human shielding that transfers moral responsibility to RSF.



When civilian harm becomes too visible and well-documented to simply deny, SAF information operations shift toward attribution manipulation, suggesting that RSF deliberately causes civilian casualties to generate propaganda against SAF. This false flag framing appears consistently across SAF-aligned content, particularly following major incidents of civilian harm that receive international attention.

The chemical weapons controversy in El-Fasher exemplifies this attribution shifting strategy at its most sophisticated. Following reports of chemical weapons use causing civilian casualties, SAF-aligned voices immediately launched coordinated campaigns denying SAF involvement whilst suggesting RSF staged the attacks.

High-credibility policy analyst and politician Amgad Fareid's detailed X analysis, originally viewed 2,215 times and reshared 20 times, argued that chemical weapons allegations suffered from "heavy political overtones" designed to manufacture parity between

SAF and RSF internationally. He linked allegations to U.S. diplomatic positioning, dismissed France24 reports as based on "questionable" imagery, and asserted leaked information in the New York Times lacked proof.

When anonymous account @sudaniaat (over 16,000 followers) reposted Fareid's framing with 230 views, it embedded his analysis into the SAF digital ecosystem, redirecting blame onto RSF and foreign actors, particularly the UAE. The narrative suggested UAE led coordinated media campaigns to "divert attention from RSF crimes" and muddy public understanding.

This attribution shifting performed multiple functions. It denied SAF responsibility for chemical weapons allegations. It positioned SAF as victim of international conspiracy and propaganda. It redirected attention to RSF atrocities whilst deflecting scrutiny of SAF conduct. It discredited international investigations and media reporting as politically motivated rather than factually grounded.

Dr Elnazeir Ibrahim Mohamed Abu Sail, presenting himself as Honorary Ambassador to UNASDG and Strategic Advisor to the President, provided authoritative counter-messaging on 6 October 2025.

His detailed **X post** asserted that chemical gas use in El-Fasher constituted war crimes attributable to RSF forces, directly challenging RSF-aligned claims that footage was fabricated or AI-generated.

Although attracting modest engagement (1,284 views, 5 reshares, 19 likes), the post illustrated SAF strategy of deploying specialists and institutional figures to provide counter-legitimacy against RSF's high-volume anonymous accounts. His subsequent account suspension, a pattern consistent with RSF coordinated mass reporting campaigns, demonstrated information suppression tactics targeting authoritative SAF counter-narratives.





SAF-aligned messaging consistently emphasises the army's supposed precision targeting capabilities and professional military standards to suggest that civilian casualties must result from factors other than SAF operations. Content frequently references SAF's training, professional military culture, adherence to rules of engagement, and use of precision weapons systems that allegedly allow selective targeting of military objectives whilst avoiding civilian harm.

This professional-precision narrative faces significant credibility challenges given the extensive visual documentation of aerial bombardment and artillery shelling of civilian areas.

However, the narrative persists partly because it aligns with broader SAF claims to institutional legitimacy and state authority. If SAF acknowledges systematic harm to civilians from its operations, this undermines its fundamental claim to represent legitimate state power exercising monopoly on violence according to legal and moral constraints.

The precision narrative, however implausible given observable evidence, proves necessary for maintaining SAF's self-presentation as legitimate national army rather than as one-armed faction among others.

Denial of Association: Distancing from the Bashir Regime Legacy

A particularly delicate dimension of SAF's information strategy involves managing the army's association with the defunct Bashir regime whilst maintaining continuity as national institution. The interview data documents this tension, "They attempt to distance

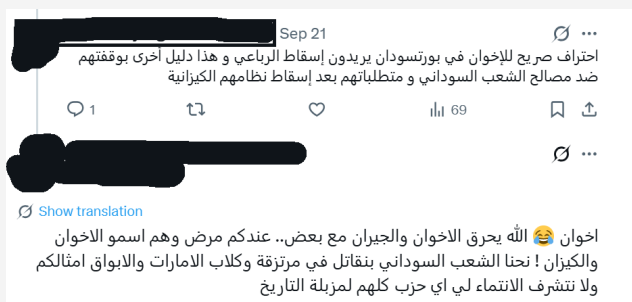
themselves from the historical Bashir regime by positioning themselves as the "new Sudan" to appeal to the younger, pro-democratic population."

This distancing proves essential for courting support from the revolutionary constituencies that overthrew Bashir in 2018-2019 and initially viewed the military establishment with deep suspicion.

SAF-aligned messaging attempts to resolve this tension through several narrative mechanisms. It distinguishes between the army as national institution and the Bashir regime as political system that temporarily captured state institutions, suggesting SAF was victim of Bashir's authoritarianism rather than its willing instrument.

It emphasises SAF's eventual role in removing Bashir from power in April 2019 as evidence that the army ultimately sided with the people against dictatorship, obscuring the complex reality that military intervention came only after revolution had already succeeded in the streets. It positions current SAF leadership as representing generational and ideological break from Bashir-era officers, despite significant continuity in personnel and institutional culture. It frames SAF's partnership with and subsequent conflict against RSF as evidence of break from past, suggesting the army now fights against the very forces (Janjaweed/RSF) that served as Bashir regime's most brutal instruments.

An influencer with 48,900 followers posts on X by using a level of ideological narrative construction. In one response to an X comment by a South Sudanese personal account, he rejects both Ikhwan/Kizan narratives and UAE-linked interference, framing Sudanese fighters as resisting "mercenaries and UAE's dogs" and dismissing all political parties as obsolete.





This rhetoric replaces spectacle with political positioning, constructing a worldview in which the conflict is not fundamentally SAF vs RSF, but Sudanese sovereignty against foreign manipulation and Islamist infiltration.

Unlike intimidation content, Makkawi's posts focus on legitimising a geopolitical reading of the war, and use mockery, disdain and nationalist authenticity claims to delegitimise opponents.

His strategy is: take rumours and public sentiment, repackage them as ideological certainty, and circulate them through quote-tweet loops to generate perceived credibility. The effect is narrative consolidation by transforming online rage into "common sense" political framing, where anti-UAE and anti-Brotherhood positions feel self-evident, and dissent is ridiculed not debated.

This "new Sudan" framing faces significant credibility challenges. Many current SAF leaders held senior positions under Bashir and participated in institutions responsible for the regime's repression.

The October 2021 coup that SAF executed against civilian-led transitional government directly contradicted claims about the army's commitment to democratic transition. SAF's partnership with RSF between 2019-2023—including their joint execution of the coup—demonstrated willingness to prioritise institutional power over democratic principles. These observable facts make the "new Sudan" positioning appear as opportunistic rebranding rather than genuine transformation.

Despite these credibility challenges, SAF continues attempting to appeal to younger, pro-democracy populations through selective framing that positions the army as potential vehicle for achieving revolutionary aspirations once the "mercenary threat" is eliminated.

This messaging suggests that civilian democratic transition remains SAF's ultimate goal but must be postponed until national sovereignty is secured against RSF's foreign-backed insurgency.

This appeal remains largely unsuccessful among core revolutionary constituencies who remember SAF's own role in repressing the revolution and executing the 2021 coup. However, it achieves some traction among populations who have become disillusioned with RSF's violence and see no immediate pathway to civilian democratic governance. For these constituencies, SAF's promise of eventual transition may appear preferable to RSF's explicit military rule.

SAF's distancing from the Bashir legacy includes selective disavowal of Islamist associations, particularly when addressing secular and international audiences. Content emphasises that contemporary SAF rejects Islamist political ideology and has severed connections with the National Congress Party remnants.

This positioning directly counters RSF propaganda that frames SAF as "Muslim Brotherhood army" or Islamist terrorist organisation.

However, this anti-Islamist positioning remains carefully calibrated to avoid alienating conservative religious constituencies whose support SAF actively courts through other messaging streams. The result is audience-segmented approach where content directed at pro-democracy youth emphasises break from Islamist past whilst content targeting religious conservatives emphasises Islamic values and religious authority. This segmentation proves sustainable only because different audience groups consume different information ecosystems with limited cross-over.

The Visegrad24 incident on 22 October 2025 exemplifies how SAF's complex positioning regarding religion can be exploited. The Polish news aggregator (1.4 million followers) **posted a video** framing the Sudan conflict in religious-civilisational terms, claiming



Christian persecution and using caption “October 7, a new day of celebration” with footage of burning buildings. The content, achieving 87,900 views, performed narrative laundering and mis-contextualisation, recasting Sudan’s conflict as religious war whilst amplifying it through international platform. This demonstrates how regional and international actors can reframe Sudan’s conflict in ways that complicate SAF’s attempt to maintain different religious positionings for different audiences.

Highlighting RSF Atrocities to Legitimise SAF Operations

A central pillar of SAF’s information strategy involves persistent amplification of RSF atrocities to legitimise SAF military operations as both necessary and morally justified. Across X, Facebook, and TikTok, SAF-sympathetic influencers, nationalist pages, and semi-official networks continually highlight RSF brutality—mass killings, chemical attacks, ethnic cleansing, sexual violence, use of foreign mercenaries—to cultivate sense of existential threat requiring absolute military response.

The systematic nature of this atrocity-focused messaging reflects strategic calculation: by keeping RSF’s documented violence constantly visible in information ecosystems, SAF maintains moral high ground regardless of its own conduct. Each RSF atrocity becomes justification for SAF operations, explanation for civilian suffering in SAF-controlled areas (framed as necessary sacrifice to defeat RSF), and evidence that compromise or negotiation would betray RSF’s victims by legitimising their victimisers. The 2 September 2025 X post claiming Darfur and Kordofan suffered systematic genocide إبادة ممنهجة at RSF hands, allegedly UAE-backed, exemplifies this atrocity-amplification strategy.

SAF-aligned content extensively features testimonies from RSF violence survivors, displaced persons, and families of victims to generate emotional responses that translate into support for SAF military operations.

These victim-centred narratives serve multiple functions: they provide human faces and stories that make abstract atrocity statistics emotionally resonant, they generate anger and desire for revenge that SAF channels into support for military operations, they position RSF as irredeemable force requiring military defeat rather than political accommodation, and they create moral permission for accepting SAF’s own problematic conduct by framing it as necessary response to RSF’s greater evil.

One pattern in atrocity-based messaging centres on reframing the El-Fashir chemical-weapons allegations as a politically engineered disinformation campaign targeting the Sudanese Armed Forces. A clear example is an October 2025 **repost** with 230 views and one like on X by @sudaniaat (a verified anonymous account with over 16,000 followers), amplifying a long thread by prominent policy analyst Amgad Fareid (@Amgad_Fareid, with over 4000 followers), a high-visibility commentator whose analyses frequently circulate within pro-SAF networks.

In his original post viewed 2215 times, Fareid argues that accusations of chemical-weapons use, largely originating from U.S. officials and Western media ecosystems, suffer from “heavy political overtones” designed to manufacture parity between SAF and RSF in the international arena.

He links the allegations to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Molly Phee’s earlier diplomatic positioning and frames the timing as suspicious, noting that the claims emerged immediately after Washington formally designated the RSF as perpetrators of genocide. Fareid’s post insists that no conclusive evidence has been shared with the Sudanese government’s joint technical committee or the OPCW, and dismisses the France24 report on chlorine attacks as based on “questionable” imagery previously aired and then deleted.



This narrative is strengthened by the claim that leaked U.S. government information appeared in the New York Times without proof and that Human Rights Watch did not independently verify the allegations.

The repost by @sudaniaat embeds Fareid's framing into the SAF digital ecosystem, using it to redirect blame squarely onto the RSF and foreign actors, particularly the UAE, whom Fareid accuses of sustaining RSF operations through mercenary recruitment and weapons supply.

By asserting that the UAE leads a coordinated media campaign to “divert attention from RSF crimes” and muddy public understanding, the post reframes chemical-weapons narratives as a strategic distraction from RSF atrocities in El-Fasher.

In ABCDE terms, the actors are high-credibility SAF-aligned policy influencers like Fareid and amplification accounts such as @sudaniaat; the behaviour centres on discrediting international investigations and positioning SAF as the target of foreign conspiracies.

The content consists of lengthy political analysis, claims of misinformation, and counter-accusations targeting RSF and Emirati networks. The degree is enhanced through reposting and narrative reinforcement across SAF digital spheres; and the effect is shielding SAF from atrocity allegations while deepening public conviction that RSF and its alleged foreign sponsors are solely responsible for war crimes in El-Fasher and beyond.

This tactic allows SAF-aligned actors to both delegitimise international scrutiny and strengthen the justification for continued SAF military operations under the banner of national protection.

The emphasis on sexual violence by RSF forces proves particularly potent in generating support for SAF operations. Content documenting or referencing mass rape, sexual slavery, and gender-based violence by RSF creates visceral emotional responses and cultural imperatives around protecting women and family honour.

These emotional appeals mobilise particularly male populations who interpret RSF's sexual violence as assault on collective honour requiring violent restoration through military victory.

Documentation of ethnic-targeted violence in Darfur particularly against Masalit, Zaghawa, and other non-Arab communities receives extensive amplification in SAF content. By highlighting RSF's ethnic cleansing and targeted massacres, SAF positions itself as defender of Sudan's diversity against racial supremacist forces. This framing appeals particularly to non-Arab Sudanese populations who might otherwise be sceptical of SAF given the army's own historical role in Darfur violence, offering them narrative where current SAF represents break from past and stands against the very forces (Janjaweed/RSF) responsible for historical atrocities.

7.3 Foreign Interference Narratives

An influential layer of narrative production during the monitoring period came from regional infotainment-style media platforms, particularly the Egyptian-run YouTube channel Mubashir24, whose three widely viewed Sudan-related videos between 6–26 October 2025 illustrate how foreign interference narratives were shaped, sensationalised, and circulated for Arab audiences.

Though the channel brands itself as a balanced “pan-Arab analytical platform,” its Sudan coverage reveals a distinct pattern: attributing battlefield momentum, brutality, and escalations in El-Fasher to RSF actions while simultaneously embedding Sudan's war inside a wider geopolitical map involving Egypt, the UAE, the US, and Israel.

Mubasher 24 (128,000 followers) functions as a high-velocity Arabic-language YouTube news-analysis channel whose outward appearance mimics professional broadcast journalism but whose operational model is optimised for rapid social media dissemination on **Facebook** (with 3.4 million followers) and their website (not working), engagement, sensational framing, and geopolitical narrative amplification.

The platform's video titles appear in English, but the content itself is entirely in Arabic, creating a dual-language façade designed to capture global search traffic while targeting an Arabic-speaking audience.

The videos rely on a consistent visual brand identity: bold, urgent thumbnails; dramatic colour palettes; battlefield imagery sourced from open-source Sudanese social media; and cut-down clips from local and regional news outlets.

The same stylistic template is used across all Sudan-related content, suggesting a semi-automated production workflow that allows for fast replication, rather than editorially verified reporting.

The narration is delivered through the voice of an anonymous female presenter with a distinct Egyptian accent, a choice that positions the channel as a “regional Arab news voice” rather than a Sudan-specific outlet, which both broadens its audience and masks its political alignment.

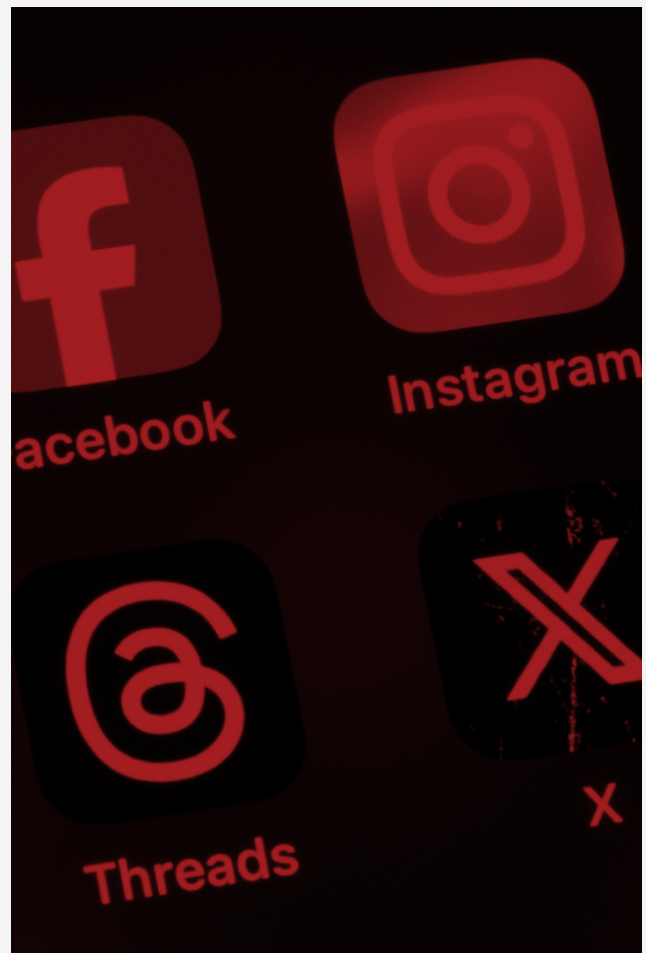
In the 26 October **video** (1,470 views) titled “!مفاجأة! حميدتي يقلب الطاولة في الفاشر.. ومصر تتأهب للتحرك”, the channel frames RSF advances in Darfur as “dangerous military breakthroughs” that overturned the balance of power “after 600 days of war.” The narrative constructs RSF as an increasingly dangerous military actor whose recent gains in El fasher threaten to disrupt regional stability, thereby justifying potential Egyptian intervention.

This framing implicitly aligns with SAF-friendly geopolitical narratives, positioning Egypt as a stabilising force while portraying RSF as a source of regional volatility with cross-border implications.

Although presented as analysis, the content relies heavily on dramatic rhetorical devices and speculative language, blurring the line between information and panic-inducing sensationalism.

Meanwhile, another Mubashir24 **video** posted the same day (341 views)—قرار خطير للرباعية بشأن حرب السودان.. أمريكا تتحرك أخيراً—centres its narrative on the US-led Quad (US, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE). The video amplifies a narrative configuration in which both SAF and RSF delegations are framed as being pressured by global powers, but ultimately presents the Quad as an actor grown impatient with RSF-linked escalations, nudging the narrative closer to a SAF-aligned interpretation of international diplomacy.

The reliance on “exclusive details” about Washington meetings serves to elevate the video's perceived credibility, despite the absence of verifiable information. The core narrative suggests that global powers are preparing decisive action.





Mubashir24's 6 October **video** (1,511 views) titled "كارثة في الفاشر.. حميدتي يستخدم سلاح خط", aligns much more explicitly with SAF-aligned atrocity framing, using emotionally charged descriptors ("أسوأ فترة في الحرب / كارثة ") to depict RSF's alleged use of "dangerous weapons" in El-Fasher. Although the video provides no evidence of chemical or unconventional weapons, its timing, just days before coordinated RSF disinformation about "SAF chemical attacks" in Kordofan, suggests how regional media content becomes organically entangled with Sudanese online battles over credibility. In this sense, Mubashir24's style demonstrates a recurring technique: using catastrophe-framed language to cast RSF as the sole escalatory actor threatening civilians.

Across the three videos, Mubashir24 ultimately reinforces SAF-favourable foreign-interference narratives, implicitly legitimising Egyptian concern, emphasising RSF ties to regional destabilisation, and portraying international actors as converging around the need to contain RSF power. This stands in contrast to RSF-aligned media ecosystems, such as the networks documented by Beam Reports' June report, that push inverse foreign-interference narratives blaming Egypt, Iran, or historical "Khartoum elites" for prolonging conflict.

A similar example of foreign-produced narrative amplification appears in a TikTok **video** posted on 28 October 2025 by the Egyptian influencer al5olasa.eslamanw, whose account (10.1K followers) posts political commentary targeted at mainly Egyptian and other Arab audiences, as well as Sudanese audiences.

The video repackages and simplifies messaging already seeded by the Arabic YouTube channel Mubashir 24, asserting that the fall of El Fasher will inevitably lead to Sudan's division within four months and alleging that the United States and Britain are orchestrating the country's breakup in a repeat of the South Sudan scenario.

In DISARM terms, the actor is an Egyptian influencer positioned as an independent commentator but functioning as a high-reach amplifier of Mubashir 24

and similar YouTube channels' geopolitical framing.

The behaviour centres on seeding falsehoods, drawing speculative causal links between battlefield developments and international conspiracy, and embedding Sudan's war into Egyptian domestic anxieties about national security and regional fragmentation. The content relies on a talking-head, urgency-based delivery style, with text overlays such as "انقسام السودان لدولتين برعاية امريكا وبريطانيا", framing predictions as imminent and unavoidable.

Repeated reference to El Fasher, Darfur, and "foreign planning" mirrors the structure of Mubashir 24's video titles, functioning as narrative extension across platforms. The degree of spread was substantial with over 507,800 views, 10,800 likes, 917 comments, 1,794 bookmarks, and 4,085 shares, suggesting strong algorithmic elevation and high engagement across Sudanese and Egyptian TikTok clusters.

The effect was to intensify fears of state collapse, reinforce conspiracy-based interpretations of international diplomacy, and legitimise pro-SAF positions by framing them as necessary to prevent foreign-backed partition. This example strongly suggests that narratives from Sudanese and regional influencers on YouTube are increasingly cross-pollinated with wider reach on TikTok.

Two online platforms, the *Daily Monitor* (Uganda / Nation Media Group) and Iran's *PressTV* published stories identified through dark social monitoring. Although positioned as international journalism, both articles reproduced and amplified faction-aligned foreign-interference narratives that map onto the conflict information strategies of SAF and RSF. Using the DISARM framework, these articles can be understood as external amplifiers that reinforce Sudan's polarized information environment.

The *Daily Monitor* article ("US imposes new sanctions on Sudan minister over Iran ties," 16 September 2025) adopts a security-institutional framing of the Sudan conflict, centring US accusations that Finance Minister Gibril Ibrahim (a senior figure in the Joint Forces coalition aligned with the Sudanese

Armed Forces (SAF)) and a SAF-linked militia are contributing to Sudan's instability.

The behaviour reflected in the coverage is one of selective emphasis, constructing a narrative where foreign interference (specifically Iranian) is positioned as a principal destabilising factor, thereby implicitly diverting attention away from RSF's well-documented relationships with external sponsors and the broader regionalised nature of the war.

The content relies almost exclusively on official US statements and reproduces them without situating the developments within Sudan's wider arms-supply ecosystem or examining the parallel patterns of support to RSF from Gulf and regional actors.

Within a DISARM perspective, the article functions as narrative extension and mis-contextualisation: an externally produced news item becomes raw material that Sudanese digital actors, particularly those sympathetic to RSF or seeking to weaken SAF's claims to legitimacy, can repurpose to reinforce narratives of SAF being compromised by foreign alliances.

The Press TV article ("RSF militants committing genocide in Sudan's El Fasher with UAE, Israel backing," 30 October 2025) operates as an overtly geopolitical, state-aligned intervention whose framing serves Iranian regional narratives and SAF-aligned Sudanese audiences hungry for authoritative validation.

The actor, a Tehran-based outlet with a longstanding editorial stance against UAE–Israel security



cooperation, deploys behaviour characteristic of narrative manipulation: refocusing the RSF from a domestic belligerent to a foreign-engineered proxy force carrying out “systematic extermination” planned and armed by Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv. It lists SAF’s foreign partners (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Iran, Russia, Turkey) as a stabilising counter-axis supporting Sudanese sovereignty.

The content is highly emotive and meticulously curated, blending claims of mass executions, scorched-earth tactics, and catastrophic civilian loss with references to “eyewitness accounts” and satellite analysis from Yale’s Humanitarian Research Lab to build credibility. Within a DISARM framing, this constitutes narrative manipulation, where Iranian geopolitical messaging is repackaged as Sudanese strategic analysis through heightened lexical choices (“genocide,” “extermination,” “collapse of the destructive project”) that escalate perceptions of threat; and amplification of SAF-supportive narratives.

7.4 Narratives amplified through the media

Whilst the previous sections examined the thematic content of RSF and SAF narratives, understanding how these narratives achieve scale and credibility requires analysis of the media infrastructure that amplifies them. Digital news platforms, pseudo-journalistic outlets, and regional media channels function as critical legitimisation mechanisms, transforming partisan messaging into what might appear to be authoritative reporting.

This section examines how coordinated media ecosystems across Arabic and English-language platforms across multiple countries serve as multipliers for faction-aligned narratives, performing what can be described as “narrative laundering” i.e., the process by which unverified claims, propaganda talking points, and coordinated messaging are repackaged as journalism and circulated to domestic and international audiences.

Alnazeirabusail @Alnazeirabusail

Show translation

استخدام الغازات الكيميائية في الفاشر جريمة حرب وانتهاك جسيم للقانون الدولي الإنساني.

بقلم: د. النذير إبراهيم محمد أبوسبل

المستشار القانوني الدولي - المبعوث من المحكمة الدولية لتسوية المنازعات
المستشار الاستراتيجي ومسؤول ملف السودان للتنمية المستدامة
السفير الفخري لمنظمة التنمية المستدامة لدى السودان

أكدت مصادر طبية مسؤولة بمدينة الفاشر أن مليشيات دقلو الإرهابية (قوات الدعم السريع المحلولة) استخدمت غازات كيميائية سامة في مناطق مدنية مأهولة خلال الأيام الماضية، مما أدى إلى إصابات خطيرة بين المدنيين شملت حالات تشنجات وهلوسة وتقيؤات حادة نتيجة استنشاقهم لهذه المواد القاتلة. وأفادت التقارير أن هذه الغازات تم إطلاقها بواسطة مسيرات انتحارية مزودة بأسطوانات المنوم وقوارير تحتوي على مواد كيميائية مجهولة الهوية حتى الآن.

إن هذه الأفعال البشعة تمثل جريمة حرب وجريمة ضد الإنسانية بكل المقاييس، وتشكل انتهاكاً صارخاً لأحكام القانون الدولي الإنساني والقانون الجنائي الدولي، إذ إنها استهدفت الأبرياء من المدنيين القُتل بصورة متعمدة ومنهجية.

الأساس القانوني للإدانة والمساءلة

يُدين القانون الدولي بشكل قاطع استخدام أي مواد سامة أو غازات خائفة في النزاعات المسلحة، وتؤكد ذلك النصوص القانونية التالية:

- اتفاقية حظر الأسلحة الكيميائية لعام 1993
- المادة (1): “يحظر على أي طرف استخدام أو إنتاج أو اقتناء أو تخزين أو استخدام الأسلحة الكيميائية تحت أي ظرف من الظروف”
- المادة (2): “تعرف السلاح الكيميائي بأنه” أي مادة كيميائية سامة يمكن أن تُحدث الموت أو الضرر عبر خصائصها الكيميائية.”
- بروتوكول جنيف لعام 1925
- “يحظر استخدام الغازات الخائفة أو السامة أو غيرها من الغازات، وجميع الوسائل المماثلة في الحرب”
- النظام الأساسي للمحكمة الجنائية الدولية (نظام روما لعام 1998)
- المادة 8 (الفقرة 2 / ب / 18): “تعتبر من جرائم الحرب استخدام الغازات الخائفة أو السامة أو أي مواد مماثلة.”
- البروتوكول الإضافي الأول لاتفاقيات جنيف لعام 1977
- المادة 35 (الفقرة 2): “يحظر استخدام الأسلحة التي تسبب آلاماً مفرطة أو إصابات غير ضرورية”
- المادة 51: “يحظر توجيه الهجمات ضد السكان المدنيين.”

بناءً على هذه النصوص، فإن مليشيات دقلو الإرهابية (قوات الدعم السريع المحلولة) تتحمل المسؤولية الجنائية الفردية والدولية عن ارتكاب جرائم حرب وجرائم ضد الإنسانية من خلال استخدامها غازات كيميائية محظورة دولياً ضد المدنيين في مدينة الفاشر.

دعوة إلى المجتمع الدولي

إن الصمت الدولي على هذه الجريمة يمثل تواطؤاً ضمنيّاً مع الإرهاب المنظم الذي تمارسه مليشيات دقلو الإرهابية ضد الشعب السوداني.

وعليه، فإننا نطالب:

- المجتمع الدولي باتخاذ موقف حازم وواضح لحماية المدنيين.
- الدول الأطراف في اتفاقية حظر الأسلحة الكيميائية بتنفيذ آليات المساءلة الجماعية.
- المنظمات الحقوقية والإعلامية بتوثيق هذه الانتهاكات ومساندة جهود العدالة.

خاتمة

إن ما حدث في الفاشر هو جريمة حرب مكتملة الأركان وجريمة ضد الإنسانية، تبرهن على أن مليشيات دقلو الإرهابية (قوات الدعم السريع المحلولة) تمارس إرهاباً ممنهجاً يستهدف وجود الإنسان السوداني ذاته.

إن العدالة الدولية أمام اختبار حقيقي اليوم: فإما أن تنتصر للقانون والإنسانية، أو تسمح باستمرار الإفلات من العقاب.

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The examples demonstrate how synchronised media campaigns operate across borders and languages to amplify specific narratives at critical moments, create false parity between warring parties, pre-emptively shift blame for atrocities, and introduce confusion that complicates accountability. These media operations represent sophisticated information warfare infrastructure that extends far beyond individual social media accounts, revealing the systematic nature of disinformation dissemination in Sudan's conflict.]

Between 4 and 9 September 2025, a tightly synchronised cluster of Arabic and English-language digital news platforms circulated a unified RSF-originated narrative accusing the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) of plotting a staged chemical-weapons attack in Kordofan. Across outlets based in the United Arab Emirates (Erem News), Sudan (Al-Taghyeer), Egypt (AlArabStyle), and international-facing English platforms (The Sudan Times), nearly identical statements, frames, and terminologies appeared within hours of each other.

The core narrative centres on a structured accusation-inversion tactic: RSF spokespeople allege that SAF intelligence and Islamist-aligned networks are preparing disguised operatives in RSF uniforms to stage a chemical attack in Kordofan. Across the UAE-based Erem News, three articles cumulatively recorded a high estimated Meltwater reach of 2.6 million illustrating

Erem's position as a major amplification node for RSF messaging. Erem's coverage uniformly adopts RSF language: describing SAF as an Islamist army, framing their operations as "terrorist", and portraying RSF victories as inevitable advances in a righteous liberation campaign. All three articles reinforce a recurring narrative structure (SAF as deceitful Islamist extremists, RSF as professional liberators) which strengthens the chemical-weapons counteraccusation.

Sudanese outlet **Al-Taghyeer** and Egypt-based aggregator **AlArabStyle** reproduced similar statements on 4 September, reaching a total of 22,645 online users.

The platforms used similar translations of the RSF press release. Meltwater metadata confirms high sentiment uniformity ("negative"), consistent keyword clusters ("Kordofan", "allegations", "chemical weapons"), and platform cross-linking. The articles repackage the RSF's message for domestic

Sudanese audiences, focusing on local credibility by referencing the Ministry of Health's contradictory statements about the absence of chemical contamination. This interplay creates deliberate informational ambiguity, generating confusion among civilian audiences in Khartoum and Kordofan who face competing authoritative claims.

The English-language expansion through **The Sudan Times** represents the strategically most consequential escalation. Despite a modest Meltwater-estimated reach of 822, its impact lies in its target audience being global.

By translating and reframing the RSF statement into English, the outlet performs narrative laundering, legitimising RSF allegations through internationalised vocabulary such as "criminal scheme," "media deception," "Islamist leaders," "heightened risks to civilians", and situating the claim within global discourses about banned weapons and accountability.

Across this multi-platform ecosystem, the actors include official RSF spokespeople (Al-Fateh Qureshi), semi-anonymous UAE-based editorial teams, Sudanese and Egyptian aggregators, and an English-language platform oriented toward international observers.

The behaviour consists of rapid, synchronised republication of nearly identical content across multiple countries, with no independent verification, counter-sourcing, or journalistic investigation, an



indicator of coordinated amplification. The content is structurally consistent: SAF is framed as Islamist, deceitful, and manipulative, while RSF is positioned as vigilant, reactive, and morally grounded. Conspiracy framing, planned deception, and the use of banned weapons serve as emotionally charged anchors. The degree of dissemination is demonstrated by the combined reach across outlets and the cross-language reproduction within a short window.

The effect is two-fold: domestically, it heightens fear in Kordofan and shifts blame pre-emptively onto SAF for any future chemical-weapons reports; internationally, it introduces doubt into global policy discussions, complicating attribution and muddying narratives around RSF atrocities in Darfur.

An example of pro-SAF counter-messaging during the El-Fasher chemical-weapons controversy came from Dr. Elnazeir Ibrahim Mohamed Abu Sail, a figure who presents himself as Honorary Ambassador to UNASDG and Strategic Advisor to the President for Sudan. On 6 October 2025, Abu Sail **posted** a detailed post on X asserting that the use of chemical gases in El-Fasher constitutes a war crime and a grave violation of international humanitarian law.

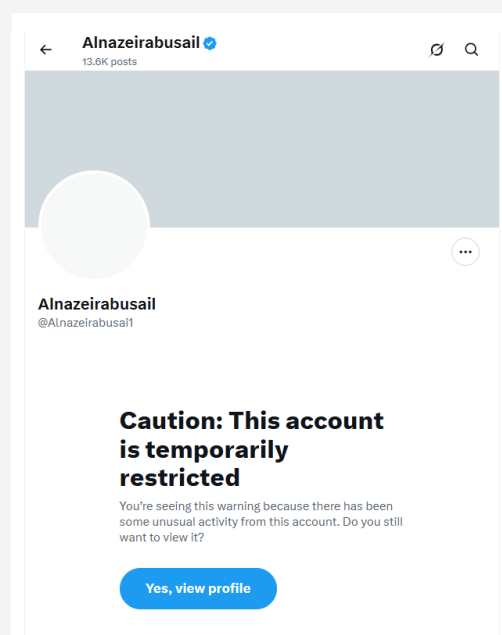
His commentary challenged RSF-aligned claims that the chemical-attack footage circulating online was fabricated, manipulated, or produced through AI synthesis. Instead, he reframed the incident as evidence of deliberate atrocities attributable to RSF forces, reinforcing SAF's broader narrative that positions RSF as a perpetrator of war crimes and ethnic targeting in Darfur.

Abu Sail's post served as a counterweight to a highly coordinated RSF disinformation ecosystem that, during the same period, pushed a unified narrative across Arabic and English media platforms, including Erem News, Sudan Times, Al-Taghyeer, and AlarabStyle. By invoking the authority of international law and presenting himself as a legal specialist affiliated with global dispute-resolution bodies, Abu Sail provided counter-legitimacy to SAF-aligned audiences, disrupting RSF's narrative laundering

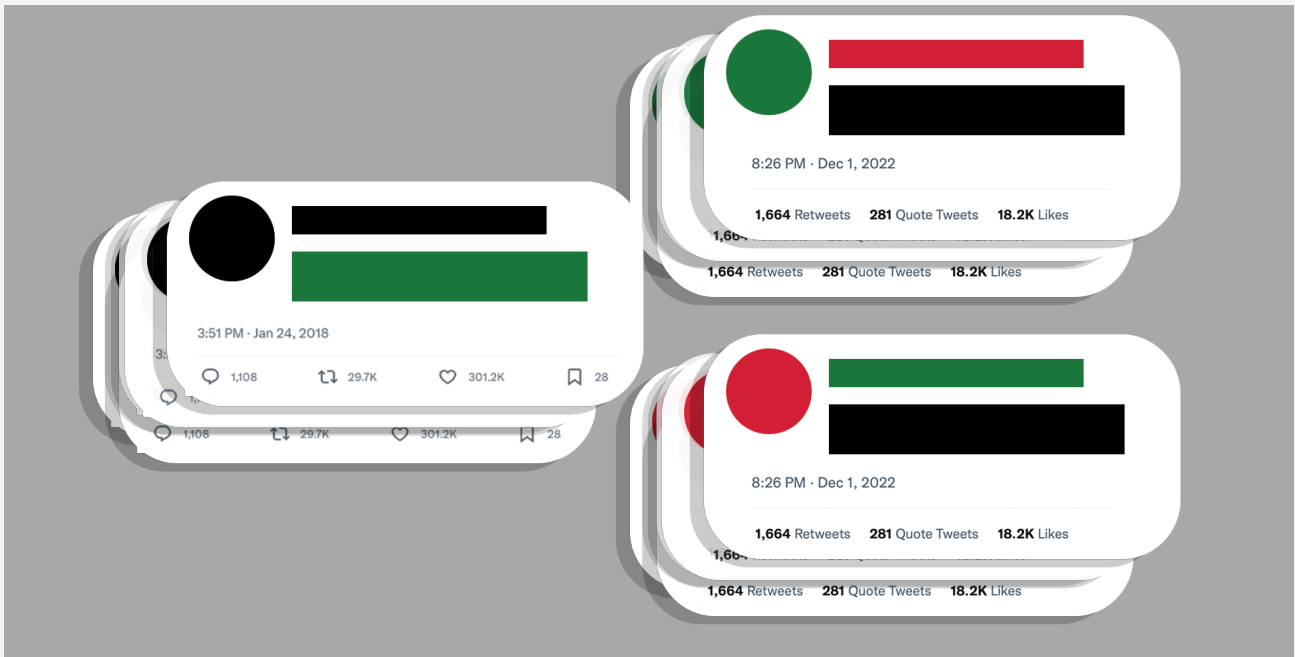
that sought to flip accountability by accusing the army of chemical-weapons use. His post also undercut RSF's tactic of content manipulation, which involved amplifying claims that chemical-attack videos were AI-generated or falsified. Although the post attracted only modest engagement (1,284 views, 5 reshares, 3 comments, and 19 likes), it illustrates the SAF strategy of deploying specialists, policy advisors, and institutional figures to counterbalance RSF's high-volume anonymous accounts and amplified messaging.

Where RSF relies on repetition, synchronised posting, and a network of new or pseudonymous accounts, SAF-aligned voices often depend on credibility, institutional affiliation, and formal language. These divergent modalities reflect contrasting digital warfare styles: RSF favouring quantity, pace, and saturation; SAF relying on authority, legal framing, and professional legitimacy.

Shortly after publishing his analysis, Abu Sail's account was suspended, a pattern consistent with known RSF behaviours that include coordinated mass reporting and harassment campaigns targeting SAF-aligned public figures. The timing of the suspension strongly suggests the use of information suppression tactics by RSF-linked clusters seeking to remove authoritative counter-narratives from the platform; especially those that reinforce atrocity allegations against RSF forces.



8. Tactics, Techniques and Procedures



Beyond actor-specific tactics, several technologies and content types are deployed across Sudan's disinformation ecosystem, contributing to the systematic degradation of the information environment. However, what distinguishes Sudan's information warfare is that tactics and techniques are not only merging and overlapping but are also emerging and evolving as the conflict continues.

As one stakeholder commented, "Sudan has become the crucible or testing ground for highly sophisticated disinformation and hybrid warfare methodologies." The techniques refined in Sudan's information battlespace are already appearing in other contexts globally. This section examines the specific tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that characterise

Sudan's information operations, including AI-generated content and deepfakes, recycled and repurposed footage, graphic imagery, hate speech and incitement, and other manipulation methods.

These TTPs represent the operational infrastructure of information warfare: the concrete methods through which narratives are manufactured, legitimised, amplified, and weaponised.

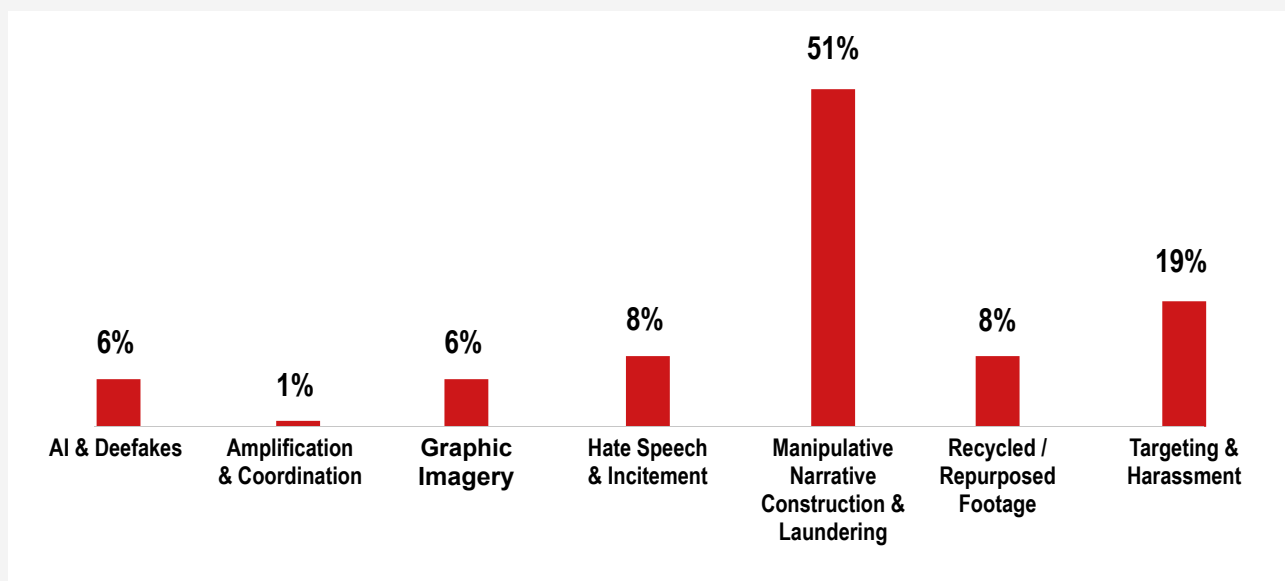
Understanding these techniques is essential for developing effective counter-measures and protecting vulnerable populations from the psychological and physical violence that information manipulation enables.

'We saw methodologies used to crash banks in the US, which we would not have been able to understand if we hadn't already been looking at Sudan.'

Those kinds of capabilities were being tested, optimised in Sudan and then we're coming to New York, to Wall Street you know and people don't stand up because you generally in popular conception think that the Sudan is some backwater.

But the world doesn't work like that anymore. The people who were probably innovating these techniques and testing them in the beginning, I suspect, were not Sudanese anyway. They were probably hired to come in and do it. This is a very internationalised way of operating'.

— Disinformation expert



The figure shows the combined Meltwater and dark social content tactics, techniques and practices that were flagged for information manipulation in the monitoring period of September - October 2025.

AI and Deepfakes

AI-generated content and ‘deepfakes’ have become extremely prevalent in the later stages of the war, especially following the events in El-Fasher. Both SAF and RSF utilise AI technologies, though with different levels of sophistication. The primary goal of widespread AI use is to cast doubt on the authenticity of genuine atrocity footage by making it seem like all circulating media is fabricated.

The RSF produces slick imagery and videos, whilst SAF supporters create low-quality deepfakes or ‘cheapfakes’ and AI avatars. AI-generated audio and voice notes represent particularly insidious tools, as they are hard for journalists and citizens to detect without specialised technical expertise.

An image, showing a terrified mother shielding her child while two armed fighters point rifles at them, was reported as AI-generated by **Misbar**, a reputable, independent Arabic fact-checking platform dedicated to combating misinformation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Misbar’s **investigation** confirmed on October 29th that the image originated from an Instagram reel created by Al Jazeera digital producer and AI artist **Khoubaib Ben Ziou**, who explicitly clarified that it was AI-generated.

This particular AI-generated image became one of the most consequential pieces of synthetic information circulating during the fall of El-Fasher, after RSF-aligned digital operators seeded it to high reaching international profiles, who then shared it unknowingly.

Some resharing was aimed at eliciting outrage/empathy (individual users, advocacy groups, diaspora and activists), while other reposts amplified a specific narrative of RSF atrocities as the image was tagged with “Elfasher” and “Darfur” at a time when both were spiking in reach and engagement while there was information scarcity as the crisis unfolded.

By the time debunks appeared, the image had already been repurposed inside RSF-aligned networks as an emotive evidence clip designed to overshadow documented RSF atrocities in El-Fasher, including the killings inside the **Saudi Hospital** and large-scale civilian executions captured in **satellite imagery**.



By November 2025, **AFP factcheck** reported the image was shared 800 times in Arabic, English and French posts.

A low reaching TikTok video (1136) shared by **@rsfbnx717** (92500 followers) on October 31st, presents itself as a warning about AI-generated content distorting the situation in Sudan. However, it operates as a classic disinformation post. The actor is an anonymous amplification account with no verifiable identity or sourcing, and the behaviour is the introduction of misleading narratives disguised as media literacy.

The content combines clipped footage of activist Sarah ElHassan warning people of the AI manipulation of the viral photo of the mother and her child. The post added a title to the video “exposing the rumors by the old regime (Kaizan) about the events of ElFashir” to suggest that the army’s situation cannot be trusted and that outside manipulation is rampant, while hashtags **#SudaneseTikTok/SudanCelebrities** **#الفاشر** **#ElFashir** **#الدعم_السريع** **#RapidSupportForces/RSF**, **#لشعب_الصيني_ماله_حل** **#TheChinesePeopleAreUnstoppable**, and **#نيالا_السودان** **#Nyala_Sudan** strategically plug the post into algorithmic clusters.

Engagement signals function as evidence for credibility rather than verification. The effect is not clarification but confusion, undermining trust in verified reporting and moving viewers toward faction-aligned interpretations.

The underlying tactic is manipulative narrative construction and laundering: by warning about disinformation, the account repositions itself as a gatekeeper of supposed authenticity, recycling trending themes, appealing to fear, and repackaging unverified fragments to introduce doubt.

Recycled and Repurposed Footage

Recycling content represents a widespread tactic, especially at the beginning of the war. Videos and images from other conflicts—including Gaza, Ukraine, Libya, and India-Pakistan—are shared and claimed to be current events in Sudan. This exploits

the emotional impact of genuine atrocity imagery whilst avoiding the risks of producing original content.

Apro-SAF anonymous X account, **@Bit_Khalifa1417** (71000 followers) posts content supporting SAF and challenging RSF narratives. In a **post** on X, she framed London-based protests against UAE involvement in Sudan as a global awakening. Under the ABCDE framework, the actor is a SAF-aligned activist account operating from the diaspora, speaking primarily to transnational Sudanese audiences.

The behaviour involves using footage of a real protest, wrapped in commentary that elevates the event from a small demonstration into a geopolitical turning point.

The content foregrounds anti-UAE slogans (“قاطعوا ذهب الإمارات” “Boycott Emirates Gold”), liberation rhetoric, and imagery of London streets to emotionally anchor the narrative in Western legitimacy. The degree of spread is strengthened by engagement-bait language (اليوم لندن... غداً كل العواص Today London, tomorrow all capitals), crisis-framing hashtags **#The_UAE_Is_Killing_Sudanese** **#الامارات_تقتل_السودانيين** **#الفاشر** / **#AlFasher** or **#Fashir** , and strategic tagging that taps into broader anti-UAE sentiment within SAF-aligned networks.

This boosted visibility to over 119,400 views, 131 comments, 1700 reshares, 5000 likes and 112 bookmarks. The effect is the reinforcement of a pro-SAF view in which Sudan’s war is driven primarily by Emirati aggression, legitimising SAF’s military campaign as defensive resistance and mobilising diaspora communities as part of a global anti-UAE political front.

From a DISARM perspective, the post relies on amplification and coordination through synchronised hashtags that surged during the El-Fasher crisis and narrative extension by linking a UK protest to a broader anti-foreign-intervention storyline.

The messaging assigns near-total responsibility for mass atrocities to the UAE, omitting the role of SAF or Joint Forces in violence in Darfur, and thus functions as simplification and distortion, a core feature of digital conflict propaganda.

While such posts do not fabricate imagery, they leverage emotional escalation, moral binaries, and geographically symbolic locations to strengthen SAF-aligned mobilisation and expand a narrative of geopolitical victimhood that resonates strongly across Sudanese digital communities.

The MQ-4C Triton tweet by @FCB60 (an anonymous account with over 6900 followers) represents a different style of pro-SAF aligned narrative construction, blending open-source intelligence (OSINT-like) aesthetics with speculative geopolitical framing. The actor portrays the US Navy drone flight as evidence of high-level American surveillance “near Sudan,” since the aircraft departed from “قاعدة الظفرة في أبوظبي”, implicitly linking UAE facilities to US military activity in the Red Sea during the peak of the El-Fasher crisis (October 27th). The behaviour mimics OSINT communities lending authority and technical credibility.

The content emphasises espionage (Surveillance and espionage operations) and situates Sudan within an international theatre of surveillance and covert operations,

reinforcing pro-SAF narratives that foreign powers (particularly UAE-linked actors) are deeply involved in the conflict.

The degree of spread (more than 213.9K views, 54 comments, 338 reshares, 969 likes and 96 bookmarks) significantly amplifies this framing, with comments and retweets often embedding it into broader claims of US/UAE complicity or strategic interference.

The effect is multi-layered: it deepens public suspicion of foreign military activity in the region; second, it strengthens SAF-aligned discourse that casts the conflict as geopolitically engineered rather than domestically driven.

Within DISARM terms, this tweet exemplifies narrative extension (repurposing real aviation data to support conflict-related claims), amplification (high-engagement OSINT-style framing), and miscontextualisation (implying strategic intent without evidence beyond flight data).

Even when not fabricated, such content powerfully shapes perception by merging technical detail with emotionally and politically charged insinuation.

Narrative laundering, also known as **information laundering** or **disinformation laundering**, is the process of masking the original source of false or misleading information to make it appear legitimate and credible.

This manipulative technique is designed to sow confusion and influence public opinion, often as part of state propaganda or information warfare. One prominent case was Almotaz Mirah (@Motaz_Mirah), a Saudi-based aviation and media professional with 22.8K followers, who **reposted** the AI generated image as part of a moralising critique of foreign interference in Sudan on X, believing he was supporting SAF-aligned narratives condemning RSF brutality.





Regional influencer Almotaz Mirah amplifying manipulated information

His post, which gathered 23.1K views, 41 comments, 216 reshares and 371 likes, demonstrates how influencers outside Sudan, lacking contextual verification tools, can become inadvertent vectors for manipulated content.

His audience interpreted the image as authentic documentation of RSF crimes, even though pro-RSF operators had initially introduced it into circulation to discredit SAF claims, muddy the atrocity narrative, and create confusion around real evidence emerging from El-Fasher.

Under the DISARM framework, this case illustrates multiple coordinated tactics: narrative laundering, where an AI manipulated visual (that was intentionally labeled by an artist) is passed off as eyewitness atrocity documentation; content manipulation, since the scene was fully generated rather than altered; amplification and coordination, seen in the rapid cross-platform reposting; and a high-impact effect, as the image's virality undermined verification processes, eroded trust in genuine documentation of violence against women and children, and provided

RSF propaganda channels with a talking point to dismiss real footage from El-Fasher as “fabrications.”

Graphic Imagery

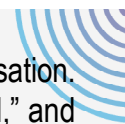
Graphic imagery is highly prevalent where fighters document and broadcast atrocities including killing, torture, and detention in real time to show control and strength. This represents a departure from traditional propaganda that typically sanitises violence.

Pro-SAF influencer Yasin Ahmed (with over 400,000 followers) recognisable by his consistently high-engagement posts and confrontational rhetorical style, circulated a **video** on September 8th on X, depicting RSF fighters humiliating and abusing civilians fleeing El-Fasher. In his framing the RSF are portrayed as perpetrators of torture, degradation, and systematic violence, while international institutions (@UN, @ICC, @Amnesty, @HRC) are invoked to demand accountability.

Under the ABCDE framework, the Actor is a high-reach SAF-aligned commentator whose identity and posting history mark him as a central node in SAF's digital mobilisation ecosystem. His Behaviour includes rapid reposting of frontline footage, emotionally charged condemnation, and sustained tagging of international bodies to externalise the conflict.

The Content relies on graphic civilian testimony clips, framed as proof of RSF atrocities and foreign-backed criminality, reinforced by hashtags like **#الدعم السريع منظمة ارهابية** / **#RapidSupportIsATerroristOrganization** and **#الامارات تقتل السودانيين** / **#The_UAE_Is_Killing_Sudanese**. The Degree of spread was 48200 reached, 39 comments, 103 shares, 356 likes and 73 bookmarks.

His posts regularly achieve tens to hundreds of thousands of views, positioning him as a key amplifier of SAF atrocity narratives. The Effect is energising SAF supporters by constructing a moral



binary around “terrorists vs. civilians,” and directing international outrage toward the UAE and RSF.

In DISARM terms, the post exemplifies narrative framing (depicting RSF violence as systemic, foreign-fuelled, and ethnically targeted), amplification (rapid circulation of the same clip across SAF-leaning networks), and coordination (synchronised tagging of global actors to trigger wider visibility).

Although the footage itself appears authentic, its contextualisation functions as strategic narrative weaponisation: it reinforces a unified SAF information frame in which RSF is inseparable from Emirati aggression and genocide.

The influencer’s style, direct calls to moral outrage, religious invocations “حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل”, and emotive crisis language, also aligns with targeting and mobilisation tactics aimed at rallying SAF constituencies and diaspora communities. As with many high-volume SAF-aligned accounts, his prominence rests less on sophisticated manipulation than on volume, emotional intensity, and moral absolutism. Yet the impact on the narrative landscape is significant, elevating civilian suffering into a core argumentative tool within pro-SAF digital warfare.

Hate Speech and Incitement

The use of hate speech in Sudan’s digital space is described in the interviews as a highly organized and systematic component of the war, deliberately engineered by the conflict parties and their affiliates to mobilize fighters, divide communities, and justify atrocities.

The most explicit and dangerous form of hate speech deployed in Sudan’s conflict involves dehumanising rhetoric that compares targeted ethnic groups to “insects” or “cockroaches” which is language deliberately echoing the terminology used during the Rwandan genocide to prepare populations for mass killing. This rhetoric has been broadcast on official state television, indicating state-level sanction and coordination of incitement campaigns.

Beyond explicitly dehumanising language, specific ethnic and regional slurs have systematically entered everyday culture and discourse, becoming

normalised tools of political and military mobilisation. Terms such as “Janjaweed,” “Kizan,” “Feloul,” and “Falanghiyat” (indicating slaves/servants in the context of this war) are deployed not simply as descriptive labels but as markers of otherness that designate entire communities as legitimate targets. “Janjaweed”, historically referring to Arab militias responsible for atrocities in Darfur, has been weaponised to mark communities associated with the RSF as inherently violent and illegitimate.

“Falanghiyat” is used to describe Black Africans and is used to target ethnic communities. Conversely, “Kizan” and “Faloul” (remnants of the Bashir regime) serve to mark SAF-aligned communities and Islamist groups as backward, authoritarian, and enemies of Sudan’s democratic aspirations. The proliferation of these terms in everyday discourse represents a successful strategy of linguistic division, where political and military conflicts become encoded as essential, immutable ethnic and regional characteristics.

Women are specifically targeted with gendered threats and violence-inciting content, serving both as direct targets and as symbolic vehicles through which to threaten and dishonour entire communities. Gendered hate speech in conflict settings typically takes two forms: explicit threats of sexual violence directed at women from targeted groups, and the use of women’s honour and bodily integrity as symbolic representations of community honour.

In Sudan’s context, gendered hate speech serves to signal that the conflict operates without restraint or boundaries. By explicitly threatening sexual violence and disseminating content that glorifies or normalises gender-based violence, actors communicate that no form of violence is off-limits. This creates environments of total fear, where entire communities understand that remaining in contested areas places women and girls at systematic risk. Moreover, gendered hate speech weaponizes patriarchal honour codes prevalent across Sudanese communities. By threatening women’s safety and honour, actors threaten the masculinity and protective capacity of men in targeted communities, often provoking displacement, retaliation, or submission which are all strategic military objectives.

9. The Effects of Disinformation & Information Manipulation in Sudan



The destruction of Sudan's established information infrastructure at the outset of the conflict in April 2023 has created an environment where systematic information manipulation and disinformation campaigns now flourish unchecked.

This has intersected with increasing systematic information manipulation and disinformation campaigns led by warring actors, from the politicised military apparatus to geopolitical influencers including bots and trolls, all wielding significant influence.

The result is an information environment characterised by alternative 'facts', misleading narratives and information, and hate speech, all of which continue to further entrench divisions, fuel conflict, and destroy social cohesion.

The Information War as Hybrid Warfare Strategy

The information war in Sudan operates as a deliberate hybrid warfare strategy, where the digital dissemination of disinformation and hate speech functions as a systematic precursor to physical violence and military operations.

Hate speech is not spontaneous but constitutes organised work running parallel to the military conflict. Its primary function is to trigger citizens' deepest instincts such as fears about threats to their honour, women, and family in order to mobilise and recruit them into fighting for the armed factions.

Beyond territory, the conflict has deliberately instrumentalised and intensified social divisions that transcend geographic boundaries.

Both armed factions have actively promoted hate speech and exploited ethnic, regional, and racial animosities to build constituencies and legitimise atrocities, eroding social cohesion across Sudanese society. In many instances, these hate speech campaigns have preceded military operations or have been used to build momentum and justification for the continuation of the conflict and continuous death and violence.



Disinformation as a Precursor to Violence and Atrocities

The temporal pattern linking online disinformation to offline violence is chillingly consistent, according to the data collected from all sources. Disinformation campaigns are systematically deployed in areas targeted for violence, working to justify future atrocities in the eyes of perpetrators and mobilise support for the action.

In Al-Halfaya, a week-long hate speech campaign preceded the Rapid Support Forces' entry into the area of Bahri, which was immediately followed by the public execution of over 45 civilians. This manipulation of information led to the total collapse of the social fabric in this previously stable, mixed community. In El Geneina, disinformation was spread targeting surrounding tribes like the Masalit, falsely claiming young men were carrying weapons.

This led to villages of those ethnicities being immediately targeted in horrific attacks, resulting in massacres against the Masalit population with over 2,000 confirmed deaths and estimates of up to 10,000 affected. These massacres are considered a direct effect of the disinformation campaigns and incitement that preceded the violence. Before the severe violations in Al-Jazira, the local population was labelled as 'collaborators' or 'RSF supporters' in the media rhetoric.

The language employed is designed to dehumanise opponents, directly mirroring rhetoric used in past genocides. Opposing groups are described using terms such as 'insects' or 'cockroaches', rhetoric that has been observed on social media platforms and official state television. The aim is to move people beyond prejudice towards believing the targeted group deserves extermination.

Campaigns use explicit threats based on gender and ethnicity to incite immediate reaction. Racial and tribal tensions are explicitly exploited, with campaigns framing the conflict as one between western Sudan and the north, facilitating the systematic targeting of groups such as the Nubians or Black Darfurians

by the RSF and tribal groups affiliated with the RSF by the Sudanese Armed Forces.

The consequences are immediate and tangible. Disinformation can lead directly to attacks such as the community kitchen in the Shambat area which was targeted by a suicide drone less than 48 hours after an army officer posted on Facebook accusing the people of collaborating with the RSF.

A false campaign promoted the 'strange faces law', claiming it was being enforced to target people from Darfur in the north. This led to real-world fear, detention, and harassment of people based on their documents or origin, even though the so-called law did not exist.

Impact on Humanitarian Operations

Disinformation has severely hindered and endangered humanitarian work. Both warring factions accuse humanitarian aid workers, local responders like Emergency Response Rooms, and international NGOs such as the Norwegian Refugee Council of being 'collaborators', 'spies', or 'intelligence elements'. This rhetoric poses a direct threat to the lives of volunteers, leading to arrests and harassment.

False information circulated on platforms like WhatsApp concerning specific conflicts or gender-based violence forces organisations like the Sudanese American Physicians Association to spend valuable time and resources planning responses to untrue claims rather than delivering assistance.

Organisations targeted by disinformation, falsely accused of siding with the RSF or SAF, experience damage to their reputation, which immediately impacts their funding and operational capacity, which then impacts on their capacity to respond.



Destruction of Social Cohesion and Ethnic Relations

The primary goal of disinformation, alongside military gain, is the fragmentation of civil society and the destruction of internal cohesion.

The conflict has created a state of profound social division amongst Sudanese, extending even to families themselves and making internal dialogue extraordinarily difficult.

Media speech contains a clear call for dividing Sudan into small parts based on tribe and region, promoting the idea of war 'between tribe and tribe, until it became between region and region' according to one stakeholder. This weaponisation of identity has successfully undermined the social fabric that previously held diverse communities together.

The constant exposure to gruesome, often fabricated content has created a widespread state of trauma, frustration, and hopelessness amongst the Sudanese population, particularly in the diaspora, who feel hypnotised and unable to discern the truth. This psychological trauma compounds the physical destruction, leaving communities unable to trust information sources or even their neighbours.

Perpetuation of Conflict and Suppression of Peace

Disinformation serves as a powerful mechanism to ensure the war continues, protecting the political and financial interests of the warring parties. Any individual or group calling for peace, dialogue, or non-violent responses is systematically attacked, isolated, and accused of treason by both sides.

This pressure transforms peace into a 'social crime' punishable by isolation and rejection, even from close family members, effectively suffocating the voice of peace on the ground. The Islamist groups and remnants of the Bashir regime, key allies of the SAF, have the continuation of the war as their primary agenda. They actively spread disinformation and misinformation against any '*diplomatic or political initiative or any hodna (ceasefire)*' to ensure the war persists.

Emotional and ethnic mobilisation is designed to compel citizens to take up arms, portraying the conflict as necessary for self-defence and survival, thereby increasing the pace of war and expanding its scope.

Whilst narratives focus on identity such as marginalisation versus nationalism, the underlying goal of disinformation is controlling the narrative and public opinion to justify the fight for power and resources from gold to land and water and prevent any negotiated solution that might challenge the control of elites.



Systematic Targeting and Violence Against Journalists

Case study as told to researcher: *A few days ago, a statement was issued by the Committee to Protect Journalists saying that there are four female journalists who were raped, and they took the information from an women's journalism entity.*

We know this entity well, and this forum - all its members are members of the Journalists' Syndicate, but the information didn't reach us as a Syndicate. After this statement immediately, most of the Executive Office members were with the Syndicate issuing a strong statement and condemning what happened, and we hadn't verified it.

From my side, as Freedoms Officer - I'm responsible for verifying information - I refused, of course, for a statement to be issued before verification, and a number of colleagues with me also refused this, even though the entity that issued the statement is the Committee to Protect Journalists, an international institution.

For a day and a half, we're verifying this information and communicating until it became clear that one colleague from those present in the {Forum} published this news and made fake emails and sent them with fake names to this entity. - this is the way of thinking she thought with, and we - for us to support those present in Darfur - we must fabricate a violation like this for support to happen so we can support them and deliver support to them.

— **Sudan Journalists Syndicate Secretariat Member**

Journalists in Sudan face direct and systematic targeting from both warring parties. Media workers are accused of being 'collaborators', 'spies', or 'agents' of the opposing side, making them legitimate targets in the eyes of armed actors. This rhetoric translates into tangible threats. Journalists have been arrested, harassed, detained, and in some cases killed for their reporting.

The dangerous environment has forced many journalists to flee their homes and cities, with some displaced internally whilst others have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Those who remain operate under constant threat, unable to report freely without risking their lives and the safety of their families.

The threat is not limited to direct violence. Journalists also face online harassment, doxing, and coordinated disinformation campaigns designed to discredit their work and destroy their reputations.

Both the SAF and RSF have established patterns of intimidating, detaining, and restricting journalists who attempt to report on atrocities, humanitarian conditions, or military setbacks. This creates a chilling effect where self-censorship becomes a survival strategy, fundamentally undermining the media's watchdog function.

10. What can be done?



Journalists in many cases rely on news and information that comes on social media, especially in wartime. There are no war correspondents and no correspondents present in conflict areas. They rely on information that comes to them from citizens or citizen journalists or those who don't possess any capabilities. They don't even know about integrity or transparency or professionalism. - Sudan Journalist Syndicate, Member of Secretariat (female)

The systematic weaponisation of information in Sudan's conflict represents one of the most acute examples of how disinformation and information manipulation can be deployed as instruments of warfare with deadly and lasting consequences. The evidence demonstrates a clear causal chain where orchestrated online campaigns of dehumanisation and incitement directly precede massacres, ethnic cleansing, and atrocities. This is not incidental to the conflict but central to its enactment and its perpetuation.

The destruction of Sudan's media infrastructure, the targeting of independent journalists, and the creation of an information environment dominated by propaganda and manipulation have achieved precisely what the warring parties intended.

Sudanese society is now fragmented and disempowered. Those calling for peace and an end to conflict have been discredited and silenced. Humanitarian response has been disrupted and completely ceased in some areas. The perpetuation of a conflict that serves the political and economic interests of armed actors whilst devastating the civilian population continues to be paramount to both sides.

The international community's response to this information warfare has been woefully inadequate. Whilst attention has rightly focused on physical atrocities and humanitarian needs, the information dimension of the conflict, which enables and amplifies those atrocities, has received insufficient attention, resources, and coordinated action.

The following recommendations aim to begin to address this gap, recognising that protecting the information environment is inseparable from protecting civilians and creating the conditions for peace.

However, for these recommendations to be practical and instrumental, cross-sector collaboration is critical.

Recommendations for Journalists and Media Workers

Safety and Professional Standards

- Implement comprehensive safety protocols addressing both physical and digital security, including secure communications, source protection, and evacuation contingency planning which are relevant to the needs of journalists inside and outside of Sudan.
- Maintain rigorous verification processes and clearly distinguish between verified information, unverified claims, and analysis. Transparency about sourcing and confidence levels is essential in an environment saturated with disinformation.
- Resist pressure to align with factional narratives. Refuse to use or amplify dehumanising language regardless of which group is targeted.
- Invest in training for younger journalists to build professional skills and ethical standards.
- Access psychosocial, trauma counselling and mental health support, recognising that professional journalism requires addressing the psychological toll of conflict reporting.

Combatting and Documenting Information Manipulation

- Dedicate resources to identifying, tracking, and debunking disinformation campaigns, particularly those that precede or justify violence against specific communities.
- Collaborate and cross-cooperate with existing fact-checking organisations such as Beam Reports and civil society organisations and human rights defenders on the ground to begin to educate audiences on identifying disinformation and manipulated content and to make sure that content being generated by fact-checking organisations like Beam Reports is reaching a wider Sudanese audience in languages and approaches suitable to audiences on the ground.

- Collaborate and cross-cooperate with different types of media platforms and journalists to raise awareness amongst consumers regarding disinformation and debunking narratives.

Fair and Equitable Network Building

- Develop inclusive journalist networks and collaboration that bridge divides of geography, ethnicity, gender, and experience level, including those inside Sudan and those in exile, ensuring representation and participation from all Sudanese regions and communities affected by the conflict.
- Create mentorship structures that connect experienced journalists with emerging voices, particularly supporting women journalists, journalists from marginalised communities, and those operating in under-resourced areas.
- Establish equitable resource-sharing mechanisms within networks, ensuring that opportunities for training, funding, international collaboration, and platform access are distributed fairly rather than concentrated amongst elite or well-connected journalists or those in the diaspora
- Build networks that explicitly value and integrate the expertise of youth, local and community journalists alongside those from established media organisations, recognising that proximity to affected communities often yields crucial insights and accountability.
- Ensure network governance structures include diverse voices in decision-making, with transparent processes for determining priorities, allocating resources, and representing the collective interests of Sudanese journalists.



Recommendations for Technology Platforms

Crisis Response

- Designate Sudan as a crisis zone requiring enhanced content moderation, reduced algorithmic amplification of divisive content, and rapid response to incitement reports.
- Deploy Arabic-language moderators with Sudanese contextual understanding and establish rapid removal mechanisms for content directly inciting violence, particularly in the critical 24–48-hour window before attacks.
- Identify and remove bot networks and coordinated inauthentic accounts, sharing threat intelligence across platforms and providing public transparency reports on manipulation campaigns.
- Offer enhanced security, verification, and protection for journalists, human rights defenders, and humanitarian workers, with rapid response channels for coordinated harassment or doxing.

Algorithmic and Policy Interventions

- Modify recommendation algorithms to reduce amplification of dehumanising language, ethnic incitement, or unverified atrocity claims. Implement friction measures such as warnings, reduced sharing, etc. for high-risk content.
- Prioritise verified sources and create dedicated information hubs for accessing fact-based content about the conflict and humanitarian resources.
- Provide verified humanitarian organisations, independent media, and fact-checkers with enhanced visibility and free promotion for peace messaging and social cohesion content.

Recommendations for Policy Makers and Governments

- **Humanitarian and Diplomatic Integration**
Include information environment protection as a core component of humanitarian response frameworks with dedicated funding and coordination mechanisms.

- Integrate disinformation and hate speech analysis and monitoring data into early warning systems for mass atrocities, recognising these campaigns as reliable predictors of imminent violence.
- Make cessation of hate speech campaigns an explicit component of ceasefire negotiations. Condition diplomatic recognition on warring parties allowing independent media access and ceasing to target journalists.

Support to media

- Provide long-term emergency funding to professional/non-partisan Sudanese media institutions and establish fellowships to encourage journalists to continue reporting, through existing institutions such as the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate. Recognise that rebuilding Sudan's information environment requires sustained investment extending beyond any eventual ceasefire.
- Fund information literacy programmes amongst Sudanese populations and support community-led initiatives promoting dialogue, countering divisive narratives, and rebuilding social cohesion.
- Support development of sustainable, non-partisan media institutions and invest in the next generation of Sudanese journalists and media professionals while simultaneously supporting existing institutions and professional journalists to collaborate across platforms and share knowledge and experience to create new nodes of influence.
- Support developing a mutual tracker for Sudanese journalists, human rights defenders, civil society organisations, on the ground and in exile, allowing them to monitor, document and debunk disinformation and hate speech, online and offline.
- Conduct rigorous research on effective interventions, share findings openly, and remain adaptable as tactics evolve, documenting and applying lessons learned from other conflict contexts.



Recommendations for International NGOs and CSOs

- Support making free, online OSINT manuals and trainings available in Arabic, with varying degrees of details for different target groups and accessible for those with low or limited data allowances/capacities.
- Support a needs assessment for types of training for journalists as part of a broader strategy. It is not useful to provide trainings on how to detect AI, for example, if journalists are unable to publish/report or support content creation.
- Develop comprehensive strategies to protect staff from being targeted by disinformation, including rapid response protocols for false accusations and staff training on digital security.
- Establish verification protocols before responding to reported emergencies, recognising false claims are deliberately circulated to waste resources.
- Incorporate monitoring of hate speech and disinformation into needs assessments and programme design, tracking correlations between online campaigns and violence spikes for early warning.
- Recognise independent media as an essential part of humanitarian infrastructure and provide funding and technical support as part of humanitarian response.
- Include media workers in protection programmes and make press freedom and journalist safety explicit advocacy priorities. Document and publicly report on information flow restrictions, attacks on journalists, and manipulation efforts, coordinating advocacy across organisations.

The war in Sudan will eventually end, whether through negotiated peace, military victory, or exhausted resources. But the damage done to Sudan's information environment. The destruction of trust, the fragmentation of society, the weaponisation of identity, the silencing of independent voices will persist long after the fighting stops.

Addressing the information dimensions of this conflict is not tangential to humanitarian response or peacebuilding, it is central to both. Without concerted action to protect journalists, combat disinformation, cleanse the information ecosystem, rebuild media infrastructure, and restore public trust in information systems, Sudan will struggle to achieve sustainable peace or democratic governance.

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