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Sudan Wartime Online Propaganda

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Executive summary

In the Sudan conflict, the propaganda battle between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on mainstream and social media makes it hard to distinguish real, false, and manipulated information. Furthermore, the lack of field press coverage allows fake and misleading news to spread more easily. Although the SAF and RSF work hard to shape the war narrative by building large supporter networks and using various methods such as disinformation and censorship, it is clear they no longer fully control the flow of information. Social media analysis shows that Sudanese politicians, military figures, influencers, and followers weave a tangled web of exchanges filled with rivalries, lies, and propaganda.

This paper explores the online propaganda battlefield in Sudan, where disinformation wars are equally intense. It analyzes SAF and RSF propaganda, their main actors, tools, methods, rhetoric, and political and humanitarian impacts. Among various media outlets, Facebook and X are the most popular platforms for Sudanese users, with two main types of content creators emerging: live streamers and YouTubers. Key players in these propaganda battles include supporters of the SAF and of the RSF, and, to a lesser extent, anti-war groups linked to the former civilian coalition, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC). These supporter groups range from genuine supporters to those motivated by profit or hidden agendas. Propaganda campaigns have deeply influenced society and the political landscape, weakening Sudan's national unity, hindering peace efforts, and prolonging the war.

Résumé

Dans le conflit soudanais, la bataille de propagande entre l'armée soudanaise et les Forces de soutien rapides (FSR) à travers les médias classiques et les réseaux sociaux entretient une grande confusion informationnelle. Et ce d'autant plus que l'absence de journalistes sur le terrain facilite la désinformation. Bien que l'armée et les FSR tentent de promouvoir leurs discours grâce à leurs réseaux de communicants et en pratiquant la désinformation et la censure, ils ne peuvent contrôler complètement l'information sur le conflit. Dans le cadre de cette guerre, les réseaux sociaux sont devenus un espace d'expression où les politiciens, militaires, influenceurs et militants expriment leurs rivalités, leurs mensonges et leur propagande.

Cette étude analyse la propagande en ligne comme une guerre informationnelle. Elle examine la propagande de l'armée et des FSR et identifie leurs promoteurs, instruments, méthodes, rhétorique et leurs impacts politiques et humanitaires. Pour les Soudanais, Facebook et X sont les plateformes les plus populaires et deux types de créateurs de contenu occupent une place importante : les *livestreamers* et les youtubeurs. Les principaux acteurs de la guerre de propagande sont les partisans de l'armée et des FSR et, dans une moindre mesure, les groupes anti-guerre liés à la coalition civile des Forces de la liberté et du changement. Ces participants à la guerre de propagande en ligne comptent d'authentiques militants aussi bien que des affairistes et des individus aux motivations cachées. Les campagnes de propagande ont profondément influencé la société et la politique soudanaises et, ce faisant, elles affaiblissent l'unité nationale, entravent les efforts de paix et contribuent à prolonger la guerre.

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Introduction

As intense fighting continues on the ground, the battle for online attention also intensifies. The Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been working hard to persuade the Sudanese people to support them and have developed cyber propaganda to reach various audiences and achieve various goals:

- Gaining legitimacy among the Sudanese people;
- Shaping opinions and improving their international image, particularly in relation to their role in disrupting Sudan's transition to democracy;
- Boosting the morale of their troops and allies.

Since the start of the war, most mainstream media¹ outlets in Sudan have been shut down, making it hard to find reliable information about the conflict. The only option left is to rely on social media, which blends real news, misinformation, and rumors—collectively called propaganda. In this chaotic environment where facts are often distorted, social media has become a platform for the constant spread of propaganda from both the SAF and the RSF, making controlling the social media narrative a crucial part of the war in Sudan.

However, SAF and RSF are not the only ones spreading propaganda. A community of supporters and influencers has quickly grown on social media. The direct interactions among the public and the constant flow of information have resulted in a large volume of content that often sacrifices quality and credibility. Along with traditional political rivalries, disinformation, and propaganda, a rise in verbal violence and vulgarity has appeared on social media, leading Facebook and X to ban several accounts, especially those linked to the RSF. The most gruesome images of the war have been shared by RSF fighters themselves, which has compelled Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, “Hemedti”, the RSF leader, to ban soldiers from filming on the battlefield.

Domestic and foreign actors influence propaganda campaigns despite Sudan's limited internet access—only 28.7% of the population has internet connectivity, and social media users make up just 7.2%.² They utilize various platforms, including satellite channels, Clubhouse, Facebook, X, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, and TikTok, to share videos, statements, interviews, and photos online. However, Facebook and X are the most popular platforms among Sudanese people, and two main types of media

1. About the Sudanese media landscape, see Appendix 1.

2. *Digital 2025: Sudan*, DataReportal, March 3, 2025, available at: <https://datareportal.com>.

communicators stand out: live streamers and YouTubers. Key domestic campaigners involved in the propaganda include parties supporting the SAF, those backing the RSF, and, to a lesser extent, anti-war and anti-military groups. Foreign state-sponsored entities in Russia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are also involved in the propaganda war.

By its very nature, war polarizes people; however, social media has made this split worse. Sudanese society is deeply fractured and influenced by the propaganda spread by the conflicting sides. Four main narratives about the conflict dominate online discussions, swinging between truth and propaganda: who the aggressor is, the legitimacy of the war, claims and counterclaims over territory, and portrayals of leadership. The public remains divided on these conflicting rhetorics and is becoming more skeptical of both sides and their ability to achieve peace.

This study aims to analyze the cyber propaganda related to Sudan's conflict, focusing on the actors, tools, and methods used by the SAF and RSF, as well as the impact of war propaganda on political and humanitarian issues. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of social media data to identify key influencers and their dynamics with interviews of Sudanese analysts, political figures, journalists, and citizens, along with social media, open-access resources, and research materials from various think tanks and universities. The quantitative analysis was carried out by Bloom Social Analytics,³ a French tech company specializing in Social Media Intelligence and trend analysis.

In terms of methodology, it is important to highlight that:

- Given the rapid and continuous flow of information, along with numerous participants across all social media platforms, this paper focuses on Facebook, X, and YouTube, which are the most popular platforms among Sudanese users. Although TikTok is also popular, it is excluded from the analysis because it mainly acts as a content amplifier, featuring short videos that are often initially posted on Facebook or YouTube. Additionally, the study concentrates on SAF and RSF propaganda, while anti-war or anti-military groups are not examined.
- Because of already available studies, this analysis mainly focuses on Sudanese actors without examining foreign involvement, although a few examples are cited. Both SAF and RSF propagandists employ complex and sophisticated disinformation networks that operate with both authentic and fake accounts to spread false or misleading content.⁴
- The number of followers on social media presented in this paper should only be considered as indicative because many sites boost their online

3. *Social Media Analytics Platform*, Bloom Social Analytics, available at: www.bloomsocialanalytics.com.

4. For a detailed analysis of these networks, see: *Media Monitoring and Disinformation Observatory*, The Beam Reports, available at: www.beamreports.com; Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab), Atlantic Council, available at: www.dfrlab.org.

presence and visibility by purchasing followers, a practice that is becoming more common on social media. Analyzing the documents, activities, and engagements provided by Bloom Social Analytics offers a more accurate picture. For clarity, a document refers to any post, comment, or share on a social network. Engagement refers to the number of interactions (likes, reactions, private shares) with the document. Activity refers to the sum of documents and engagements.

- The numerous media outlets, along with hundreds of bloggers and influencers, reach millions within the country, making their impact difficult to measure as the ongoing war limits the ability to conduct surveys to gauge public perception. Therefore, the political and humanitarian effects of propaganda are assessed by interviewing some informants and analyzing mainstream and social media discourse.

Figure 1: Sudan Map



Source: World atlas, maps of Sudan, available at: www.worldatlas.com.

Sudan is divided into 18 administrative states, with the coastal city of Port Sudan serving as the *de facto* capital. As of July 2025, the SAF controls ten states, while the RSF oversees four states in Darfur. The three Kordofan states and northern Darfur continue to experience intense fighting.

Propaganda's tools, actors, and methods

In the early hours of the war on 15 April 2023, the RSF took control of the National Radio and Television Corporation and turned it into detention centers.⁵ They also seized the printing press district in downtown Khartoum, where newspaper offices are located, and stopped the publication of print media. The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate (SJS) reported that about 90% of the media infrastructure had been destroyed. By November 2023, 26 newspapers had stopped publishing, seventeen radio stations had shut down, and six television stations based in Khartoum had closed. The syndicate also said that the RSF vandalized and looted the offices of local and international TV and radio channels.⁶

Furthermore, journalists and media workers continue to face threats and harassment in all states, with over 30 reporters killed and many others detained, tortured, displaced, or seeking refuge elsewhere.⁷ As a result, a large network of news websites now operates in exile. According to Reporters Without Borders, at least 431 journalists have fled Sudan for neighboring countries. Most of them, about 300, live in Egypt, while 71 are in Uganda, 23 in Kenya, 22 in Libya, and 15 in Chad.⁸ A significant community of journalists and influencers has also sought refuge in Turkey and Qatar, especially those supporting the SAF, while the UAE hosts journalists aligned with the RSF. Additionally, many journalists have moved to the United States, Canada, and Europe, particularly in France, where well-known influencers have settled.

Journalists cannot freely move between or within regions to cover the conflict because the warring parties do not respect press freedom, protect journalists, and uphold their right to report on armed conflicts independently. Additionally, whether inside or outside Sudan, journalists are frequently targeted by hate campaigns on social media, which pose a serious threat due to the lack of protection. These threats, along with on-field harassment and exile, have led to a decline in professional, national Sudanese journalism,

5. "RSF Turned Media Premises into Detention Facilities: Sudanese Journalists Union", *Sudan Tribune*, December 7, 2023, available at: <https://sudantribune.com>.

6. "Racist Rhetoric Fuels Sudan-South Sudan Tensions", Ayin Network, January 21, 2024, available at: <https://3ayin.com>.

7. "No One Else Will: Sudan's Journalists Risk All to Report the War", France 24, April 23, 2025, available at: www.france24.com.

8. "Sudan's Exile Media – Fragile Sources of News About a Forgotten War", Reporters Without Borders, April 14, 2025, available at: <https://rsf.org>.

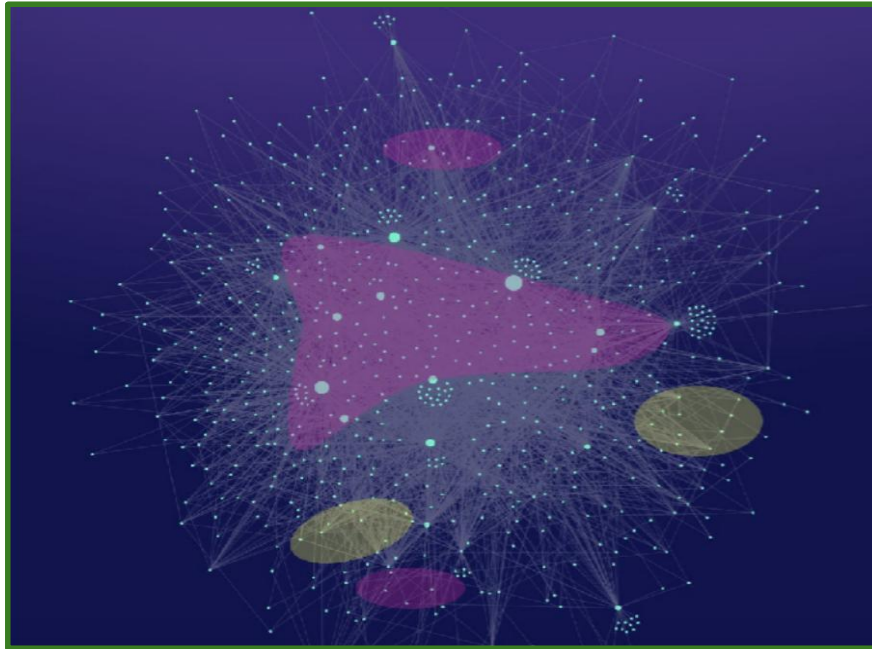
paving the way for new, popular, often propaganda-driven social media platforms like live-streamers and YouTubers to fill the void.

Beyond the mainstream media, the information warfare between SAF and RSF also includes actions against Internet services, such as shutting down or damaging telecommunication infrastructures and enacting digital censorship. Since the conflict started, internet services have been regularly disrupted, with 2024 experiencing the most severe shutdowns. In February 2024, the RSF took control of data centers in Khartoum and carried out two shutdowns—one in February and another in September—that caused nationwide disruptions lasting for months. The RSF justified these actions as retaliation for the SAF shutting down internet services in Darfur for several weeks. The SAF cut off the internet in Darfur in January 2025, and another shutdown occurred in Omdurman, though the reason remains unclear. The RSF has exploited these internet disruptions by deploying Starlink in its controlled zones and charging people exorbitant prices.⁹

At the outset of the conflict, the SAF and the RSF showed different levels of media coverage, leveraging both mainstream and social media to shape their narratives. The RSF was well-prepared and maintained a strong presence on social media, while the SAF was barely active. However, the situation has gradually shifted. Now, the SAF leads the social media scene, producing more documents, engagement, and activities, as shown in the graphic below (Figure 2).¹⁰ Social media activity analyzed by Bloom Social Analytics revealed that, out of 29.2 million activities generated over six months from January to July 2025, the SAF was the most active with 9.03 million activities (30% of the total). Meanwhile, the RSF recorded only 371 thousand activities (1.27%). The notably low activity of the RSF may be caused by the suspension of many of its Facebook and X accounts.

The image below illustrates the digital influence through interactions generated by Facebook accounts. The larger and more centrally positioned shades represent the accounts with the most interactions (likes, comments, shares, etc.). Here, SAF and its supporters (shown in pink) outperform the RSF accounts (shown in yellow), which generate significantly fewer interactions.

9. “The Black Market that Delivers Elon Musk’s Starlink to U.S. Foes”, *The Wall Street Journal*, April 19, 2024, available at: www.wsj.com.

Figure 2: Active actors on Facebook from January to July 2025

Source: © Bloom Social Analytics.

SAF communication tools and actors

Early in the war, the SAF’s media presence was either muted or defensive. The official spokesperson for the armed forces, Brigadier General Nabil Abdullah, was unable to perform his communication duties because he was besieged with SAF commanders-in-chief at the General Command headquarters in Khartoum. Although SAF supporters tried to fill this gap through social media, these isolated, uncoordinated efforts lacked a strategic purpose. This limited media coverage can be explained by the paralysis of the army at the start of the war.¹⁰

It can also be explained by the fact that “SAF-owned media was jihadist, lacking modernization or development for thirty years, and it also lacks the necessary funding”.¹¹

Gradually, the SAF regained control of its media outlets and reorganized its media campaign. According to Hassan Ismail:¹² “only after lifting the siege of the General Command headquarters in Khartoum in January 2025, SAF’s media campaign became more organized. SAF commanders started

10. Phone interview conducted on 13 April 2025 with Dr Salah Eddin Elzein Mohamed, a Sudanese researcher, academic, and advisor at Al Jazeera Media Network.

11. Phone interview conducted on 2 May 2025 with Dr Mohamed Jalal Hashim, a writer and lecturer at Khartoum University.

12. Phone interview conducted on 3 September 2025 with Hassan Ismail, a journalist and former Minister of Culture and Information in al-Bashir’s last Government of National Accord.

appearing in the media, delivering clear mobilization messages. Additionally, the Sudan Sovereign Council succeeded in reorganizing internal satellite channels, such as Alzrga TV, which stresses SAF's message about the importance of unity in the 'dignity war' and counters disinformation created both inside and outside the country".

According to Bloom Social Analytics, the pro-SAF communication strategy centered on "a warrior-like rhetoric that especially praises soldiers, with a strong portrayal of al-Burhan as the savior of Sudan. At the same time, Hemedti's forces are portrayed as the 'forces of evil' and terrorists. This rhetoric also emphasizes a strong desire to retake Khartoum". This approach is evident in its enhanced coverage of symbolic images of SAF leaders, portraying them as determined, victorious, and unifying figures. The change in tactics has been most evident during Al-Burhan's speech in Port Sudan against a backdrop of a burning site following the RSF's heavy drone attacks in May 2025, and during the SAF's centennial celebration¹³ at the Apedemak Temple, the god of war, located at the archaeological site of Naqa,¹⁴ in River Nile State in August 2025. The site was carefully chosen to symbolize issues of sovereignty, dignity, and the legitimacy of a deeply rooted civilization.

Figure 3: Al-Burhan



Source: X page of the Transitional Sovereign Council, @TSC_Sudan and Sudan Tribune, May 6 2025.

SAF's communication tools include both mainstream and social media, whether they are directly military-owned or government-controlled outlets overseen by the Ministry of Culture and Information. After the military coup on October 25, 2021, all state-owned media, including the national radio and television corporation, were immediately taken over by the military's "moral guidance department," which is attached to the SAF Chief of Staff. Its main tasks involve managing military media, boosting troop morale, and conducting

13. The British Army established the Sudan Defence Force as local auxiliaries in 1925, which was Sudanized in 1954, when a Sudanese commander led the Armed Forces for the first time.

14. Al-Burhan's speech was symbolically delivered at the temple of Apedemak, a war god. Naqa and al - Musawwarat are among the most important protected archaeological sites in Sudan. These locations were the heartland of the Kingdom of Kush. They feature archaeological temples dating back about 3,000 years and have been designated as a World Heritage Site since 2011.

psychological warfare. Its media center manages two outlets: an e-newsletter published on Facebook¹⁵ and Voice of the Armed Forces radio FM97, which is broadcast on YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook. The oldest and most widely broadcast public TV and radio channels are now transmitted from Port Sudan, the coastal city on the Red Sea, and the *de facto* capital of Sudan.

However, this department, which is supposed to lead SAF's media campaign, has taken only one visible action nearly a year and a half after the war began. In November 2024, it launched a campaign called "Stay Sudanese," aimed at promoting the values of national unity and social justice. According to Gasim Alzafir,¹⁶ "The department of moral guidance has been marginalized due to the inclusion of Islamists that Al-Burhan prefers to exclude. Furthermore, the SAF lacks funding for media development." According to Alasadig Alrizaigi,¹⁷ "The department's work was halted because members of the Moral Guidance Department, including the SAF spokesperson, were surrounded at SAF headquarters in Khartoum. After retaking Khartoum, the department produces most of the videos and photos documenting the war and issues military statements. However, its unseen role in motivating and boosting morale within the army has never stopped."

Figure 4: "Stay Sudanese," campaign by the SAF's Moral Guidance Department



Source: The SAF's Moral Guidance Department.

#Stay_Sudanese: #No_to_tribalism, #No_to_racism, #No_to_regionalism

On social media, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) initiated online surveillance and censorship through the Electronic Jihad Unit, established in 2011,¹⁸ and continued these activities until the NISS was reformed by the transitional government in 2020. Over time, the SAF has created several social media platforms to promote its narratives, with the

15. Facebook, accessed 18 September 2025, available at: www.facebook.com.

16. Phone interview conducted on 3 May 2025 with Gasim Alzafir, Secretary-General of the National Movement for Construction and Development.

17. Phone interview conducted on 12 September 2025 with Alasadig Alrizaigi, who leads the Sudanese Journalists Union.

18. The 2020 Freedom House report (section B, Limits on Content: B5) stated that the electronic Jihad Unit operates from offices in Khartoum, as well as in Qatar and Turkey.

SAF Spokesperson (a verified account) and the official SAF media serving as two main outlets on Facebook, X, and Telegram. Other official outlets supporting the SAF on social media include the accounts of the Transitional Sovereign Council (TSC) and its president, Abdelfattah Al-Burhan.

Figure 5: Official media platforms supporting SAF (July 2025)

	Number of followers	
	Facebook	X
SAF Spokesperson	2,300,000	96,900
Transitional Sovereign Council	930,000	286,800
Sudan National Television Channel	522,000	3,005
Armed Forces Newspaper	130,000	
Abdelfattah Al-Burhan	50,000	129,000
Voice of the Armed Forces Radio FM97	34,000	
Official SAF media		147,500

Source: compiled by the author.

SAF community of dedicated communication experts

The SAF depends heavily on the goodwill of its supporters, which includes a collaborative network of professional media experts and a broader audience of businesspeople, politicians, diplomats, activists, singers, and poets. They share opinions, praise the SAF, and provide live updates to the public. Analysis by Bloom Social Analytics shows that “pro-SAF supporters are very actively engaged on social media and are significantly more visible, sharing narratives that resonate more effectively with the public.” This propaganda network features both public and anonymous social media accounts. Al-Bashoum (the fox)¹⁹ and Alinsirafi,²⁰ two anonymous figures, are very popular, with their highly watched YouTube channels linked to Facebook, X, TikTok, and Telegram. While Al-Bashoum claims to live in Sudan, Alinsirafi does not disclose his location.

19. B3shom Show, YouTube channel, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/@b3shom>.

20. Alinsirafi channel. Alinsirafi is a sarcastic nickname that might refer to a person who is preoccupied with trivial issues.

Popular yet anonymous

The phenomenon of Alinsirafi's live podcast is particularly noteworthy, as his daily broadcasts attract a large audience despite his anonymity. His live streams are shared across all social media platforms, and clips are widely circulated on TikTok. His channel features over a thousand videos, accumulating more than 24 million views.

Al-Bashoum (the fox) is another anonymous account, with nearly 25 million views on his YouTube channel, about a million followers on Facebook, and over 300,000 on X. He combines a satirical style with highly researched investigative content. Al-Bashoum strongly opposes the RSF, having exposed Hemedti's suspicious business dealings and connections with the Wagner Group before the war started. Documents and bank accounts of the RSF published by Al-Bashoum were used by Global Witness in their investigation titled "Exposing the RSF's secret financial network".²¹ Since the war began, Al-Bashoum has continued to reveal information about RSF's internal practices, conflicts, and corruption. For example, he exposed the network of Al-Goni Hamdan Dagalo for recruiting fighters in Kassala town, eastern Sudan, and uncovered UAE military operations in Sudan.²² Though a strong supporter of the SAF, Al-Bashoum also makes investigative videos condemning corruption within the army and the current government, which is based in Port Sudan.

Craze for livestreamers

Livestreaming on social media has become the most popular propaganda method among SAF supporters. Besides Alinsirafi, other popular livestreamers include Ibrahim Mohamed Al-Mustafa Omar, known as Alshorti²³ Wad al-Mustafa (504,000 followers on Facebook). He is a former police officer in the Sudanese traffic police who appeared on social media during the rule of ousted President Al-Bashir, speaking out against corruption within the police. As a result, he was imprisoned and was only released after the fall of al-Bashir by a pardon issued by Al-Burhan. He reportedly arrived in France at the end of March 2023.²⁴ Another popular livestreamer is Basyouni Kamel Basyouni Mohamed. He presents himself on his Facebook page as a teacher and political activist (283,000 followers). Ali Mirghani, a Sudanese journalist based in Glasgow, is one of the most popular daily livestreamers. He founded Alzool²⁵ TV, which has over

21. "Exposing the RSF's Secret Financial Network", Global Witness, December 9, 2019, available at: <https://globalwitness.org>.

22. YouTube, Post, Available at: www.youtube.com.

23. Alshorti means policeman.

24. "The Owner of the Well-Known FB page Named 'Sudanese Police' Arrives in Paris", Open Sudan, March 25, 2023.

25. Alzool is an archetypal Sudanese term that refers to a person.

800,000 followers on Facebook²⁶ and 79,000 subscribers on YouTube, accumulating over twenty million views.²⁷ His daily reports on the ground situation, supported by maps, draw thousands of viewers. A young, humorous influencer, who goes by his first name Ismail and is based in Egypt, runs the podcast Lamsatzool,²⁸ which has over 80,000 followers and has accumulated more than thirteen million views.

Dedicated journalists

Additionally, the SAF receives strong support from professional media outlets and a community of dedicated journalists who take a leading role among cyber communicators. These media outlets include satellite TV channels, various podcasts, and YouTube channels that attract thousands of viewers. Tayba, Alzrga, and Ashroq are among the most popular satellite TV channels backing the SAF.²⁹ Tayba and Ashroq TV channels were linked to the former al-Bashir regime and were seized by the Empowerment Removal Committee³⁰ in January 2020. The Tayba channel, now based in Turkey, features a daily program, “Special coverage of Hemedti’s rebellion,” which attracts thousands of viewers. Ashroq and Alzrga channels broadcast from Sudan.

Well-known Sudanese journalists and political analysts host various TV shows and podcasts. Hassan Ismail, a former member of the Umma Party, a journalist, and a former Minister of Culture and Information during the al-Bashir regime, is one of the most popular journalists. He hosts a podcast on Alzrq TV and is often invited to Tayba TV. His straightforward, sarcastic, and confrontational style, combined with his deep knowledge of Sudanese politics, resonates with the public and makes him one of the most influential figures on social media. He is based in Turkey. Balad Al-Khayr,³¹ hosted by Diaa el-Din Bilal, editor-in-chief of Al-Sudani newspaper, and Dr. Muzamil Abuelgasim, former editor-in-chief of “Al-Youm Al-Tali” newspaper, are both based in Qatar and frequently appear on Al Jazeera and other Arabic satellite channels. Belsudani Podcast³² is hosted by Al-Tahir Hassan Altoum, who was closely connected to the former regime of President al-Bashir and is now based in Turkey. The Alsudan podcast,³³ hosted by young journalist Rabie Siraj, has already garnered over 14 million views despite only running for a year. These podcasts and shows are criticized for mainly offering pro-SAF coverage and updates on the war fronts, which support the SAF’s cause and include little criticism. Another common trait

26. Al-Zol TV Facebook Page, available at: www.facebook.com.

27. Al-Zol YouTube Channel, available at: www.youtube.com.

28. Lmsat-Zool YouTube Channel, available at: www.youtube.com.

29. The Tayba channel has 790,000 subscribers, while Alzrga TV has 849,000 subscribers.

30. The committee was established in November 2019 to dismantle the empowerment of the al-Bashir regime, remove corruption, and recover public funds.

31. Balad Al-khayr YouTube Channel, available at: www.youtube.com.

32. YouTube Playlist, available at: www.youtube.com.

33. Al Sudan Podcast YouTube Channel, available at: www.youtube.com.

among these supporters is their belief in a military solution and the conviction that the SAF can and should defeat the RSF rebellion.

Other journalists with large social media followings, frequent writings, and appearances on satellite TV include Osman Merghani, the owner and editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper “Al-Tayyar,” currently based in Cairo. During the al-Bashir regime, Osman Merghani³⁴ was targeted in an assassination attempt in 2014, imprisoned multiple times, and the NISS often suspended his newspaper. Rishan Oshi,³⁵ based in Sudan, is also close to SAF and is the only female journalist to speak openly about corruption in SAF-controlled states. Alsadiq Ibrahim Ahmed Ibrahim, known as Alsadig Alrizaigi,³⁶ signifies his affiliation with the Rizeigat tribe. He is part of the same Mahiriya clan as Hemedti but is supporting SAF and opposing the RSF. He served as the editor-in-chief of Assayha Newspaper, owned by Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo, but he resigned in 2019. Considered close to Islamists, Alsadig Alrizaigi leads the Sudanese Journalists Union. Ahmed Albalal Altayeb,³⁷ founder of Akhbar Al-Youm and Al-Dar newspapers, was also a producer and presenter on Sudan TV. Closely connected to military officers, his X account is believed to provide verified information. Other known supporters of SAF include journalists like Nagi Alkarshabi,³⁸ who is based in Istanbul and hosts various popular programs on Al-Sharq Channel. Mohamed Mohamed Kheir, based in Canada, is known for widely shared audio recordings on WhatsApp and currently serves as a political advisor to the current Prime Minister, Kamil Idris. In February 2025, an entity called “Journalists for Dignity” was launched in Port Sudan by the controversial journalist Ataf Abdelwahab; however, it currently has no significant activities.

Another group of SAF media propagandists includes several military and security analysts. Two well-known analysts who frequently appear on satellite TV channels are Aamir Hassan Abas³⁹ and Dr. Osama Idrous.⁴⁰ Both have close ties to the Islamists and the former regime of al-Bashir. Currently based in Turkey, Aamir Hassan Abas is a retired army officer and one of the founders of the Intelligence Operations Authority, established by Salah Gosh, the former strongman of NIIS. Osama Idrous, an assistant professor at Omdurman Islamic University, is currently based in Qatar and often appears on Al Jazeera TV.⁴¹

34. Osman Mirghani Facebook Page, available at: www.facebook.com.

35. Rishan Oshi Facebook Page, available at: www.facebook.com.

36. Alsadig Alrizaigi, Facebook page, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/AlsadigAlrizaigi/>.

37. Ahmed Al-Balal, X (Twitter) account, available at: https://x.com/ahmed_albalal?lang=fr.

38. Nagi Karshabi Facebook page, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/nagikarshabi/>.

39. Amer Hassan Facebook page, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/amer.hassan.104/>.

40. Osama Idrous Facebook page, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/osama.idrous/>.

41. See the Appendix 2.

Politicised artists

Some artists have also been enlisted in the SAF war propaganda effort. A well-known propagandist was Lieutenant Mohamed Ali Abdel Majeed, popularly known as the “Poet of the Armed Forces.” He wrote poems praising the SAF while comforting the people, inspiring hope, and encouraging sacrifice. He wore a special uniform decorated with tree branches and bird feathers and carried the Sudanese flag. His death in February 2025 deeply moved the people. His poems continue to be widely shared by SAF official media and supporters. The famous singer Nada Al-Qalaa has composed viral patriotic songs that have been watched by millions. She has written over twenty songs in the past two years to boost the morale of SAF troops, honor SAF leaders, promote popular defense, and praise the joint force, while also mocking the RSF.

Figure 6: SAF propagandists: Alinsirafi, the poet, and Nada Al-Qalaa



Source: Alinsirafi webpage, "The poet" Tagpress.net, Instagram @Nada algalaa.

The presence of SAF propagandists on X and Facebook platforms has increased significantly, with the top four trending hashtags from January to July 2025 being #Sudanese_Armed_Forces, #AlBurhan, #DignityWar, and #The_Rapid_Support_Forces_are_a_terrorist_organization.

Figure 7: Top trending hashtags (January 1 to July 1, 2025)

	#Supporters	Activity	Social media analyzed
#Sudanese_Armed_Forces	SAF	5.28M	Facebook YouTube TikTok Instagram
#AlBurhan	SAF	4.71M	
#UAE_kills_Sudanese	SAF	1.38	
#The_Rapid_Support_Forces_are_a_terrorist_organization	SAF	1.26M	
#One_Army_One_People	SAF	1.20M	

Source: © Bloom Social Analytics.

Media surveillance and censorship

The new “Electronic Media Department,”⁴² established by the Ministry of Culture and Information in April 2025, appears to focus more on overseeing and monitoring online activities than on developing the digital media sector.

Censorship is also enforced on satellite channels and the activities of journalists. In December 2024, the new Minister of Culture and Information, Khalid Al-Aiser, warned reporters and journalists against covering RSF news, calling it “unpatriotic”.⁴³ In April 2024, the Sudanese Ministry of Culture and Information suspended Al Arabiya, Al Hadath, and Sky News channels, citing a lack of transparency and professionalism.⁴⁴ Then, in February 2025, they banned the Al Sharq TV channel, affiliated with the Saudi Research and Media Group (SRMG), without offering an official explanation. Although the ban on Al Sharq has been lifted, the Ministry issued a new rule prohibiting media channels from broadcasting live outside their offices without prior approval from the Foreign Media Department.⁴⁵ This crackdown on foreign channels followed RSF drone attacks on Port Sudan and the decision to cut diplomatic ties with the UAE. Currently, international media outlets can film outside their offices and broadcast live only in Port Sudan.

Sudan’s Telecommunications and Post Regulatory Authority has banned voice and video calls via WhatsApp nationwide since July 25, 2025; however, text messaging and group chats are still allowed. The authority said that the measure is a “precautionary step” to address threats to national stability and protect the country’s interests.

RSF communication tools and actors

The RSF communication landscape differs from that of the SAF because RSF has limited access to mainstream media, relying more on social media platforms, including bots and troll farms, and leveraging foreign assistance. Alsadig Alrizaigi⁴⁶ indicated that “RSF allocates large sums of money for its propaganda campaigns. Youssef Ezzat, the former political advisor to Hemedti, was responsible for managing troll farms based in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. After Ezzat’s dismissal, RSF’s media communication has been directly managed by Algoni Hamadan Dagalo (Hemedti’s brother) and his cousin Idriss Ibrahim Modalel. However, the UAE oversees RSF’s media activities and hires specialists from various nationalities and firms to operate RSF’s communication campaigns.”

42. “Al-Aiser Issues a Decision to Establish an Electronic Media Department to Supervise Electronic Newspapers”, *Alsudani News*, April 29, 2025.

43. “Sudanese Authorities Ban Al-Sharq TV Office”, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, February 21, 2025.

44. “Sudan Suspends Arab Satellite Channels for Lack of Transparency and Expired Licenses”, *Sudan Tribune*, April 2, 2024, available at: <https://sudantribune.com>.

45. “Journalists’ Syndicate Denounces Restrictions Imposed by Sudanese Authorities on Media”, *Sudan Tribune*, May 9, 2025.

46. Phone interview conducted on 12 September 2025.

In the absence of mainstream media coverage during the early months of the war, RSF's dominance on social media became clear as its efforts to sway public opinion online started before the December 2018 revolution that ousted President Omar Hassan al-Bashir. These efforts expanded significantly during the transitional government from 2019 to 2023. Algoni Dagalo teamed up with the Wagner Group to develop the RSF media unit.⁴⁷ Significant resources were invested to make it more global and advanced. Reportedly, members of the dismantled Electronic Jihad Unit, along with journalists, videographers, and social media influencers, were recruited by Algoni Dagalo and received training at RSF media centers⁴⁸ and abroad. The RSF maintained a main media unit in Khartoum, along with regional offices in cities such as Zalingei, Nyala, and al-Geneina in Darfur, as well as an office in eastern Sudan, all focused on internet botting.⁴⁹

Immediately after al-Bashir's fall, RSF and Hemedti's personal Facebook and X accounts gained large following before both platforms removed them for "policy violations".⁵⁰ Before the war started, these accounts praised the RSF and portrayed him as a savior, defender of democracy, and supporter of the December Revolution. In reality, these campaigns were meant to rebrand Hemedti from a warlord into a statesman. He was even encouraged to include some English words in his speeches to improve his image. Clearly, the RSF and its supporters campaigned to win public support by rewriting the RSF's history, erasing their crimes against humanity in Darfur since 2003, and the massacre of peaceful protesters at the "sit-in" on June 3, 2019, outside the SAF headquarters in Khartoum.

Following the outbreak of war, media campaigns have become even more essential for RSF and its leaders as they try to gain international legitimacy by projecting strength, organization, and strong leadership. At the same time, they seek to attract a larger domestic audience by spreading propaganda around themes often associated with other political groups (including the National Congress Party [NCP]) and rebel movements, such as democratic change, marginalization, secularism, and martyrdom. However, a clear gap exists between RSF's official political rhetoric and what is shared on its supportive social media accounts. Analysis of social media documents by Bloom Social Analytics revealed that "the communication strategy of pro-RSF propagandists heavily focuses on RSF soldiers, often through

47. The media unit was headed by Idriss Ibrahim Modalel, an Islamist supportive of the former al-Bashir regime.

48. The RSF opened two internet training centers, one of which is called the Kuala Lumpur Center, directed by Huzeifa Abunuba, who was the business manager of the Islamist and former Vice President Hassabo Mohammed Abdel Rahman (2013-2018), now one of Hemedti's close advisors.

49. Albashom account indicates that Zalingei, Nyala, and al-Geneina offices were headed by Babikir Elgasim (an Islamist supporter of al-Bashir's former regime), Husein Said, and Jido Ahmed Talab, respectively. The Eastern Sudan office was headed by Nazar Elfadil, also an Islamist supporter of al-Bashir's former regime.

50. "Explainer: Sudan's RSF Banks on Telegram After X Suspends Accounts", BBC Monitor, October 30, 2024, available at: <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk>.

testimonials on TikTok, which aim to humanize them. Additionally, their strategy relies heavily on Islam, emphasizing the RSF martyrs. There is also a strong glorification of Hemedti, who claims to be betrayed by politicians, particularly Al-Burhan.” Youssef Ezzat, Hemedti’s former top political advisor, confirms the RSF’s inconsistent stance on Islamism, stating, “The RSF’s political narrative reveals real contradictions. The leadership used a discourse focused on fighting the Islamists. However, the significant presence of Islamists within the RSF’s ranks weakened this narrative, revealing a core contradiction between their words and actions”.⁵¹

Figure 8: The old, the new, and the latest Hemedti



Sources: BBC Arabic (www.bbc.com), The African Report (www.theafricareport.com), and Aljazeera.net, March 15 2025.

Propaganda capacity under constraint

Despite abundant resources, trained personnel, and foreign aid, RSF’s presence in mainstream media remains limited. In the early hours of the war, the RSF seized control of the Sudan National Broadcasting Corporation, the country’s most widely broadcast radio and TV station, but was unable to operate it. In addition, its efforts to acquire news satellite media have been unsuccessful. In 2022, RSF purchased the Hoosh satellite channel for half a million dollars, but later withdrew from NileSat to broadcast from Jordan before being shut down by Jordanian authorities in 2023. A second attempt to buy Mauritania’s Alwataaniya TV also failed. Currently, the so-called Alwataniya 24 channel occasionally posts videos on Facebook and YouTube. Recently, RSF launched a TV channel, “Aljahizia,” on social media platforms. RSF also operates an online newspaper, Assayha,⁵² which is owned by Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo. The RSF benefits from media coverage that likely aligns with its interests, including UAE-based Erem News and Sky News Arabia.⁵³ The formation of the Sudan Founding

51. Y. Ezzat, “Analysis of the Current Situation in Sudan and the Challenges of the Future of the Rapid Support Forces”, Alnilin, March 14, 2025.

52. Assayha newspaper.

53. Sky News Arabia is a partnership between UAE-based International Media Investments (IMI) and Sky News Arabia.

Alliance, also known as Tasis,⁵⁴ has increased RSF media visibility through Tasis accounts on Facebook and X.⁵⁵

Journalists supporting RSF include: Eljamil Elfadil,⁵⁶ Khalid Mohieldin,⁵⁷ Moneim Suleiman,⁵⁸ Al-Rabie Abdelmoneim,⁵⁹ and Ibrahim Bagal Siraj, among others. Eljamil Elfadil is a member of the Rizeigat tribe. He has participated in Tasis Foundation meetings in Nairobi and is now based in Nyala. Khalid Mohieldin has joined Tasis and hosts the Al-Ahdath Podcast on Sudanmix TV. Moneim Suleiman was the editor-in-chief of the Al-Hurriyat electronic newspaper, which opposed the previous al-Bashir regime; however, many Sudanese see him as an untrustworthy journalist because he often praises the UAE for helping Sudan while denying its involvement in Sudan's conflict. Al-Rabie Abdelmoneim, based in the United Kingdom, is one of the most outspoken RSF influencers, broadcasting his live streams through Quick News. Ibrahim Bagal Siraj⁶⁰ appointed himself governor of Khartoum during the RSF's control of the capital. After the SAF recaptured Khartoum, he clashed with the RSF, accusing its leadership of letting him down because of his Zagawa origin. He recently appeared in Abeché, and rumors are spreading about his arrest in Chad. Both Al-Rabie Abdelmoneim and Ibrahim Bagal Siraj were closely linked to the NCP and the Muslim Brotherhood.⁶¹

Another group of media propagandists includes social media influencers, especially on TikTok. Well-known vocal propagandists include:

- Umm Ashwaq Hamid, based in Paris, who has called herself the mother of RSF fighter;
- Maisara Mohamed Yagoub, known as Maisara Bob,⁶² primarily posts videos on TikTok and likely resides in France;
- Ibrahim Eldukhri⁶³ calls himself Mr. Radim, which means a person who insults. He strongly affirms his Arab origin and lives in France;
- Elfadil Mansour, a controversial figure due to his stance against members of FFC/Somoud.⁶⁴

54. Tasis is a coalition of the RSF, paramilitary forces like the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North of Alhilo, and a few politicians' dissidents from traditional political groups such as the Umma and the Unionist parties. It was founded in February 2025.

55. See appendix.

56. Algamil Alfadil (journalist-writer) Facebook Page, available at: www.facebook.com.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Moneim Suleiman, Facebook page, available at: www.facebook.com/p/بخلصاء.

59. Quick News, YouTube channel, available at: www.youtube.com.

60. Ibrahim Bagal Siraj, Facebook page, available at: www.facebook.com.

61. Mohamed Ali Al-Jazouli, a video showing a prominent Islamist and leader of the State of Law and Development Party, shortly before the war, stands between Abdelmoneim Al-Rabie and Ibrahim Bagal, thanking them for their media efforts and their work in the Islamic ranks against the secular camp.

62. @.misreaaboob, TikTok account, available at: www.tiktok.com.

63. @ibrahim.adukhri, TikTok account, available at: www.tiktok.com.

64. Phone interview conducted on 12 September 2025.

According to Alsadig Alrizaigi, “RSF has been associated with low-quality influencers who lack political or intellectual insight. Furthermore, these influencers turn the war into a tribal and regional conflict, spreading hateful speech through vulgar language and name-calling.”

However, the RSF’s official social media presence is limited because of the ban on its official sites. By August 2023, Meta had removed the official pages of Hemedti and the RSF from all platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, resulting in a loss of about two million followers. Similarly, X suspended the RSF’s main account (@RSFSudan), which was closed on October 18, 2024, along with several accounts linked to the RSF. This included accounts of spokesperson Al-Fateh Quorashi Bashir and the most vocal advisors, Omran Abdalla, journalist Alrabie Abdelmoneim, Albasha Tbaeq and field commanders Wad al-Bhair and Omer Jibril. Before the ban, the RSF’s verified account on X⁶⁵ had over 100,000 followers and served as an important tool for mobilization.⁶⁶

This prompted the RSF to turn to Telegram for its official accounts. Although the RSF established a Telegram account in 2019, it became its main social media platform after its accounts on Meta and X were shut down. Hemedti’s account on Telegram (@GeneralDagalo) has a mere 14,500 followers, while the RSF account (@RSFSudan) has 53,900, which is much less than their banned accounts on X and Facebook.

Subcontracting propaganda to foreign actors

Since 2019, the RSF has intensified its media campaigns using bots and troll farms, mainly based in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, according to The Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab) at the Atlantic Council.⁶⁷ This prompted the Ministry of Culture and Information to request the removal of RSF Facebook accounts to help reduce hate speech and halt the spread of disinformation against the democratic transition.⁶⁸ In September 2021, Facebook removed nearly a thousand accounts, pages, and groups⁶⁹ operated on behalf of the RSF for “coordinated inauthentic behavior” labeling the RSF

65. “How Disinformation Campaigns Endanger Lives in Sudan”, Social Media Exchange (SMEX), May 19, 2023, available at: <https://smex.org>.

66. “Sudan War: X Shuts Down Hemedti and RSF Commander Accounts”, Dabanga, October 20, 2024, available at: www.dabangasudan.org.

67. In October 2021, DFRLab identified a Facebook network involved in suspicious coordinated behavior to promote the RSF. This network, which had links to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, was later removed by Facebook for engaging in “coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign or government entity”. T. Knight and A. Chenrose, “Suspicious Twitter Accounts Artificially Boost the Image of a Sudanese Militia Leader Amid Armed Conflict”, DFRLab, April 25, 2023, available at: <https://dfrlab.org>.

68. Phone interview with Rashid Saeed, former undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Information.

69. 666 accounts, 116 pages, 69 groups, and 92 Instagram accounts. Facebook stated that fake accounts, pages, and groups on Facebook, along with Instagram profiles, targeted domestic audiences by masquerading as freelancers, journalists, and students in Sudan. The posts were primarily in Arabic, echoing RSF talking points and amplifying material from the paramilitary group’s verified accounts.

as a dangerous organization.⁷⁰ However, the RSF propaganda network has not been entirely dismantled, as some of its pages remain active.

Hemedti has also hired global public relations firms and individuals to boost his image and present himself as a trustworthy partner for the West. In May 2019, Ari Ben-Menashe, an Israeli-Canadian lobbyist, signed a six-million-dollar deal with Hemedti to enhance his reputation in the United States, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United Nations (UN), and the African Union.⁷¹ About two months before the war started, the Africa Intelligence news site reported that Hemedti contacted the French public relations firm Think Doctor to manage RSF's online accounts and provide media training.⁷² Reportedly, Hemedti met several times with representatives from Think Doctor; however, it remains unclear whether any agreement was reached.

Similarly, in 2022, Hemedti sought to enhance his reputation within the European Union by disseminating information that a Paris-based Sahel Conflict Monitoring Center had acknowledged his significant role in fostering relations between the European Union and Sudan, as well as his efforts to combat illegal immigration.⁷³ The Beam Reports, a Sudanese fact-checking organization, found no credible source for the study, other than an image of a book cover. They noted that the Sahel Conflict Monitoring Center has no online presence, except that a Chadian journalist, Mahamat Ali Kalyani, identifies himself as its director.

Another sign of foreign involvement in the RSF's communication campaigns was uncovered in April 2023, when social media users shared images from Hemedti's verified Facebook page showing that his account is managed by three people, one of whom is based in the UAE.⁷⁴

Additionally, troll farms are reportedly located in the UAE and are operated by managers from Israel, Lebanon, and Egypt.⁷⁵

A report by "Beam Observatory" published in June 2024 revealed an active "Israeli-Emirati" network on the X platform attacking the SAF and linking it to Islamists and other terrorist groups affiliated with ISIS.⁷⁶ This disinformation campaign is coordinated by Amjad Taha, a Bahraini-Emirati researcher, who frequently claims on his X account that the SAF is connected to Hamas without providing proof. Another Emirati influencer,

70. "September 2021 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report", Facebook, September 2021, available at: <https://about.fb.com>.

71. "UAE Taking Steps to Gain Control of Sudan's Main Port", Al Jazeera, April 25, 2020, available at: www.aljazeera.com; *FARA Documents*, U.S. Department of Justice, available at: www.justice.gov.

72. "Hemedti Seeks Spin Doctor in Europe", Africa Intelligence, February 9, 2023, available at: www.africaintelligence.com.

73. "How Does the Rapid Support Forces Seek to Improve Its Image Through Foreign Fronts?", The Beam Reports, February 14, 2022, available at: www.beamreports.com.

74. "Hemedti: Activists Reveal That His Facebook Page Is Managed from the UAE", BBC Arabic, April 19, 2023.

75. Interview with a Sudanese academic in Cairo, January 28, 2024.

76. "The Beam Observatory Uncovers an 'Israeli-Emirati' Disinformation Network on the X Platform Accusing the Sudanese Army of Involvement with Terrorist Groups", Beam Observatory, June 10, 2024.

Rauda Altenaiji (@FormulaRauda), in a recent video, accused the SAF of drug trafficking with Colombians, citing false reports and documents.⁷⁷ The post aimed to counter the revelation that Colombian fighters had been recruited by the UAE to fight in Darfur.

Sky News Arabic, a satellite channel jointly owned by Abu Dhabi Media Investment Company and British Sky News, reported, “With confirmed evidence, the terrorist organization the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is actively participating in the war in Sudan, as its fighters are deployed on the streets of the country”.⁷⁸ Later, it became evident that the video aired by Sky News is actually a misleading clip from Somalia.⁷⁹

Methods of propaganda

Methods and tactics of propaganda have been employed in many ways, such as hacking accounts, spreading rumors, exaggerating victories, manipulating images and videos, defamation, distorting facts, and amplifying messages with targeted information. War propaganda campaigns have also used disinformation networks. Beam reports showed that one of the most active networks supporting the SAF is an outlet called “Sama al Sudan.” This network, established in June 2023, includes five main pages with a combined following of over 787,000, mostly operating from Turkey and Syria.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the DFRLab uncovered a network of over 900 accounts used to spread content related to the RSF and Hemedti. This network generates social media engagement by using both real and fake accounts.⁸¹ All these methods have effectively generated a large amount of confusing and misleading information.

The most significant hacking event happened just days after fighting started, when a verified X account hacked the RSF’s main account and claimed that Hemedti had been killed. The RSF quickly released a statement denying the claim and accused the SAF of hacking their website. The rumor about Hemedti’s death still fuels discussion on social media. Disinformation is the most common tactic used by both the SAF and the RSF. For example, after the RSF government was rejected by regional and international organizations like the African Union⁸² and the UN,⁸³ as well as various regional countries, RSF propagandists attempted to legitimize their government by quickly spreading misinformation on Facebook accounts.

77. Abdo Elgni, X (Twitter) post previously available at: <https://x.com> (account suspended).

78. “Beheadings and Slaughter in the Streets: Did ISIS Enter the War in Sudan?”, Sky News, March 30, 2024.

79. “How Accurate Is the Sky News Arabia Report on ISIS’s Participation in the Sudanese War?”, Beam Observatory, April 1, 2024.

80. “From Türkiye and Syria, a Disinformation Network Supports the Sudanese Army and Attacks Civilian Forces”, Beam Reports, December 24, 2024.

81. “Suspicious Copy-and-Paste Network Responds to Tweets from the Sudanese Paramilitary Group”, DFRLab, September 7, 2023.

82. African Union, Peace and Security Council, 1292nd Meeting, Addis Abeba, July 29, 2025.

83. “Security Council Rejects Creation of Rival Government in Sudan”, UN News, August 13, 2025, available at: <https://news.un.org>.

A statement attributed to South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit claimed he congratulated Hemedti as head of the Presidential Council.

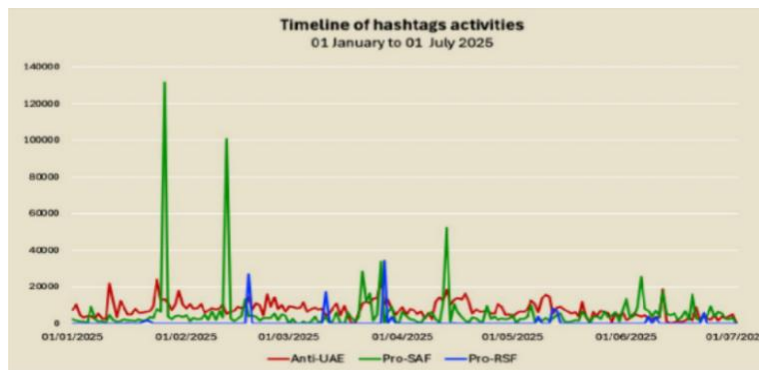
Beam reports concluded that the statement is fabricated because it was not posted on the Facebook account of the Office of the President of South Sudan or on any official website in South Sudan.

Defamation is commonly used by all parties. In its effort to discredit the civilian force “Somoud”,⁸⁴ SAF propagandists seize every opportunity to tarnish their reputation. After the United States imposed sanctions on Sudan for its use of chemical weapons in 2025,⁸⁵ Somoud was immediately accused of providing information about the chemical weapons to the Americans. A false statement circulated on social media in both Arabic and English, with accusatory headlines like “The US Congress unmask the FFC” and “national treason”.

Hashtags are commonly used by the SAF, RSF, and disinformation networks to reinforce narratives, spread false information, and counter propaganda. Pro-SAF propagandists often use #Battle_of_Dignity, while pro-RSF supporters adopt #Battle_of_Democracy. Two common counter-propaganda among SAF supporters are #Emirates_kill_Sudanese and #Rapid_Support_A_Terrorist_Militia. The graph below illustrates the frequency of use for these hashtags.

Beam Reports indicated that hashtags like #Sudan, #Gaza, and #Hamas were created and spread by specific disinformation networks to share misleading content linking events in Sudan to Hamas’s actions in Gaza, a comparison made by Emirati researcher Amjad Taha on his X account.⁸⁶

Figure 9: The rise in the use of pro-SAF and pro-RSF hashtags from January to April corresponds with the heavy fighting over territory in Gazira and Khartoum states



Source: © Bloom Social Analytics.

84. Civilians, political parties, and former rebel groups have formed the Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces, known as Tagadom. On February 10, 2025, Tagadom split into the Civil Democratic Alliance of the Forces of the Revolution, known as Somoud, and the Sudan Founding Alliance “Tasis”, which is allied with the RSF. Dr. Abdalla Hamdok heads the Somoud coalition.

85. “Imposing Measures on Sudan for Its Use of Chemical Weapons”, US Department of State, May 22, 2025, available at: www.state.gov.

86. “War Propaganda Concept and Application in the War in Sudan”, Beam Reports, September 24, 2024.

Propaganda rhetoric

While propaganda themes are diverse and abundant, four recurring narratives dominate discussions and greatly influence public opinion, often causing sharp divisions among Sudanese people and leading to confusion about the nature of the war:

1. Who was the aggressor?
2. Legitimizing the war;
3. Claims and counterclaims of territorial control;
4. Al-Burhan and Hemedti's leadership styles.

Who was the aggressor?

As is typical in many conflicts, the main rhetoric involves each side accusing the other of initiating the war. On the first day, Al-Burhan and Hemedti spoke to Al Jazeera TV channel⁸⁷ and presented conflicting narratives about the conflict, with each side accusing the other of initiating the attack.

SAF: A planned and premeditated coup by the RSF

SAF and its propagandists assert that the RSF was the first to open fire and that they had planned the coup in advance with assistance from elements of the Forces of Freedom and Change-Central Council (FFC-CC)⁸⁸ and the UAE. For example, SAF propagandists argue that the true start of the war was on April 13, 2023, when the RSF besieged Merowe Airport, despite the strong warning issued by the SAF ordering them to withdraw.⁸⁹ To confirm the RSF's planned coup, the SAF released a video showing Youssef Ezzat, the former first advisor to Hemedti, in the television control room on the day the war erupted, preparing to announce the RSF's statement of power capture. Furthermore, the SAF argues that at the moment the first bullet was fired, the RSF arrested several senior army officers, some of whom were detained in their homes while preparing for a normal workday, including the Inspector

87. "Burhan and Hemedti Speak to Al Jazeera: How Did the Clashes Begin?", Al Jazeera, April 15, 2023.

88. The FFC is a large coalition of civilian groups that has been managing the transitional period since the ousting of former president Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. The coalition split in 2022 into the FFC-Central Council and the FFC-Democratic Block. After the war began, the FFC-CC, in collaboration with other political entities, formed the Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces, known as Tagadom.

89. Statement by the SAF: "Our country is at a historic and dangerous turning point, heightened by the RSF's mobilization and expansion in Khartoum and other cities. These movements occurred without the SAF leadership's approval or coordination, sparking panic and fear among citizens, exacerbating security risks, and increasing tensions among regular forces", Sudan News Agency (SUNA), April 13, 2023.

General of the Army and the commander of the Military Intelligence Institute. Al-Burhan himself was at home at the time and narrowly escaped capture, while most of his guards were killed.

RSF: We did not attack anyone

The RSF propaganda claims that Islamist forces started the war and trapped the army in the conflict, insisting that their battle is not with the army, but with the Islamists, whom they accuse of controlling the SAF. This narrative is based on the strong opposition of NCP members to the Framework Agreement.⁹⁰ Threats made by Al-Haj Adam Yusuf and Major General Anas Omar, two senior Islamist leaders,⁹¹ to halt the implementation of the Framework Agreement by any means necessary are circulated by the RSF as proof that the Islamists instigated the war. Both men were captured by the RSF during the early days of the conflict. A video⁹² released by the RSF shows Anas Omar in military attire, confessing the NCP's role in orchestrating the conflict in collaboration with the SAF. The SAF dismisses these statements as meaningless, as they were obtained under coercion.

The narrative of the “first bullet” promoted by the RSF and its supporters aims to establish two main points: to absolve itself of any responsibility for starting the war and to blame the Islamists, thus tapping into existing hostility among the Sudanese people towards the former regime of al-Bashir. Two years have gone by since the war began, yet the debate about the “first bullet” still buzzes on social media. The first bullet narrative has generated 170 thousand activities on social media, mostly by pro-SAF supporters, with less discussion from RSF backers, as analysed by Bloom Social Analytics.

Legitimizing the war

Through ongoing propaganda campaigns, both the SAF and RSF claim they are fighting for a more democratic, stable, and peaceful Sudan. The SAF portrays itself as the protector of the Sudanese people and the defender of the country's dignity, sovereignty, and unity, while the RSF continually changes its reasons for war, emphasizing its role as the guardian of democracy and opponent of Islamism, which once created it.

90. The Framework Agreement was signed on December 5, 2022, between Sudan's military leaders and a coalition of political, professional, and civilian forces led by the FFC-CC. It was intended to remove the military's official role in Sudan's politics and economy, with armed forces prohibited from engaging in non-military commercial activities. Security sector reform would establish a unified, professional, and non-partisan national army.

91. Anas Omar was the former governor of East Darfur State and Al-Haj Adam was the head of the National Congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum State.

92. YouTube video, available at: www.youtube.com.

SAF: The dignity war

On the second day of the war, Al-Burhan told CNN by phone, “This is an attempted coup and rebellion against the state.”⁹³ The SAF clearly views itself as a legitimate force fighting against a rebel militia. The SAF’s reason for fighting is reflected in its slogan, “the war of dignity,” which has been widely shared on social media. According to Bloom Social Analytics, the hashtag #Dignity_War continues to grow in popularity on social media, generating 1.03 million activities from January to July 2025. It surpasses both RSF’s #Battle_For_Democracy and Smoud’s #No_To_War, which recorded 64.4 thousand and 3.38 thousand activities, respectively.⁹⁴

Increasingly, the SAF emphasizes the legitimacy of its cause to the Sudanese people. For example, national mobilization and mutual solidarity between the SAF and the people are continuously promoted by the SAF and its propagandists.⁹⁵ In solidarity with the people, the SAF continued to demand that the RSF evacuate citizens’ homes, viewing it as a prerequisite for any negotiations. A hashtag #One_army_One_People, along with images, videos, and messages, is used to demonstrate unity between the SAF and the people in the face of the RSF. Bloom Social Analytics reported 1,2 million activities for the hashtag #One_army_One_People from January to July 2025.

RSF: A parade of reasons for the war

In its effort to dissociate from the former regime, of which it was a key part, the RSF produces propaganda focused on fighting against the Islamists. However, RSF continues to change its narrative or reasons for fighting over time. At the start of the war, RSF claimed it was “defending itself from the SAF’s assault”. Then it shifted to “fighting against the Islamists of the former regime and reinstating democracy achieved by the people’s revolution” widely using hashtags like: #Battle_For_Democracy, #Guardians_Of_Glorious_Revolution, and #Islamic_Movement_Terrorist_Organization.

Next, they stated that they aimed to end “State 56” controlled by the elites of central Sudan’s riverine regions. After that, Hemedti blamed the Framework Agreement for igniting the war. Now, RSF leaders say they are defending the marginalized people of Sudan, releasing a new hashtag of “Old Sudan is crumbling, new Sudan is advancing”.

93. “Sudan Military Leader Accuses Rival of ‘Attempted Coup’ As Vicious Fighting Grips Capital”, CNN, April 17, 2023, available at: <https://edition.cnn.com>.

94. Bloom Social Analytics, available at: www.bloomsocialanalytics.com.

95. “Al-Burhan Alerts About a Conspiracy Endangering Sudan’s Existence”, Al Jazeera, June 28, 2023.

Figure 10: Former President al-Bashir, NCP president Ahmed Haroun, and Hemedti



Source: "The President of the Republic Convenes Ahmed Haroun and Hemedti", SUNA, October 17, 2018.

On April 17, 2023, Hemedti tweeted (the account is currently banned) about the resurgence of Islamism, urging the international community to act now to stop the crimes of Al-Burhan, an Islamist extremist. Furthermore, in an Al-Arabiya channel interview that aired on April 23, 2023, Hemedti stated that Al-Burhan has planned to facilitate the return of the Islamist movement led by radical Islamists Ali Karti and Usama Abdallal.⁹⁶ Furthermore, RSF propagandists spread misinformation claiming the SAF is linked to radical Islamist groups, like Daesh, using the Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigades as a symbol of a radical jihadist unit.

Claims about Daesh and other radical jihadists fighting alongside the SAF are being spread not only by the RSF but also by some civilian groups like Somoud and media outlets linked to the RSF. However, none of these sources has provided solid evidence. Juhainah and Beam, fact-checking platforms, have documented various instances of fake news and misinformation circulated by the RSF and its supporters to back the rhetoric of Karti's war.

96. "Hemedti to Al Arabiya: I Am in Khartoum. Burhan Planned the Return of the Islamic Movement", Al-Arabiya, April 23, 2023.

Figure 11: Humorists mock the RSF's claims of democratic rule



Source: Omer Dafalla, caricature "RSF Destroys State 56", Medameek, July 14, 2023; Obaid Cartoons, caricature "Battle for Democracy", Facebook page, June 29, 2024.

Tactical propaganda: claims and counterclaims of territorial control

Claims and counterclaims about military advances or retreats on the ground have emerged since the first day of the war. Hemedti hastily declared in a phone interview with Sky News that "the RSF controls more than 90% of Khartoum and all vital airports, and from now until tomorrow morning, we will win the war".⁹⁷ The SAF responded by reaffirming that they have destroyed all RSF bases around Khartoum and that the war will end within a few days. Additionally, numerous conflicting statements have been circulated by both the SAF and the RSF, detailing advances, the capture of new positions, and the defection or surrender of soldiers from either side.

The recapture of some key states by the SAF has triggered numerous social media activities by pro-SAF groups, with only a few reactions from pro-RSF, as shown in Table 3. According to Bloom Social Analytics, for each state reclaimed by the SAF, the narratives follow a similar pattern: SAF supporters emphasize the liberation of these states, highlighting abuses and atrocities committed by the RSF.

They present the SAF territorial gain as an effort to end a regime of terror. Meanwhile, RSF supporters similarly accuse the SAF of massacring civilians during the recapture of the states (notably in Gezira), targeting people based on their identity, tribal affiliation, or regional background.

97. Freedom Doctors, X (Twitter) post, April 15, 2023. available at: <https://x.com>.

Figure 12: Activities following the SAF recapturing three states

State	Activities	Pro-SAF	Pro-RSF
Khartoum	947,000	28%	0.1%
Gazira	389,000	31%	< 1%
Dennar	269,000	39%	6%

Source: © Bloom Social Analytics.

To boost the SAF's territorial gains, SAF propagandists highlight the unrestricted movement of SAF leaders in recaptured cities, surrounded by a supportive public. However, a recently circulated video falsely claims to show Al-Burhan inspecting field forces in the city of El Fasher; in reality, it depicts Al-Burhan visiting the city of Umm Rawaba in Kordofan, thereby having no connection to El Fasher.⁹⁸

As the RSF seized new territories, its propagandists presented it as an unstoppable force controlling a large area, asserting dominance, and claiming minimal losses. The RSF posted deceptive footage on its Twitter account on the second day of the war. It claimed that its fighters had entered Al-Burhan's residence at SAF Command,⁹⁹ an image intended to project superiority and further demoralize the weakened SAF.

In light of losses, the RSF leaders continually deny defeat. They never mention evacuations and instead prefer terms like "rectifications of the line". Furthermore, they neglect to acknowledge retreats, leaving them unaddressed. In a video address, Hemedti stated, "We will remain in Khartoum, will never leave the presidential palace, and the Sudanese army will not defeat us".¹⁰⁰ However, after their defeat in Khartoum, he scarcely acknowledged it in an audio recording posted on Telegram, stating, "There have been withdrawals to reposition forces in Omdurman. This withdrawal from Khartoum was a collective decision, and we will return again stronger and more resilient".¹⁰¹

Despite retreating completely from Khartoum on March 26, 2025, along with most of Omdurman, RSF propagandists continued to make one-sided claims about maintaining control of the capital city. For example, the RSF wrote on its Telegram account on May 16, 2025, "The brave RSF men from Omdurman continue their patrols across the neighborhoods, reaffirming

98. "The Video Is Old and Does Not Show Burhan in the Front Rows Towards El Fasher", Misbar, April 19, 2025.

99. "RSF Claim to Enter Al-Burhan Residence at the SAF Headquarters", Al Jazeera Channel, April 17, 2023.

100. "Hemedti: We Will Remain in Khartoum and Will Not Leave the Republican Palace", AlHadath, March 15, 2025.

101. "Hemedti Says His Forces Have Withdrawn from Khartoum and Vows to Continue Fighting", Sudan Tribune, March 30, 2025.

their commitment to defeating the SAF militia”.¹⁰² They also circulated a video clip on social media, claiming that RSF launched airstrike operations, completely destroying the SAF General Command in Khartoum. However, the image turned out to be from India.¹⁰³

Whenever the RSF suffers losses on the ground, its leaders rush to share videos and release statements, claiming to be on the battlefield—a tactic intended to boost the fighters morale and recruit more soldiers. For example, Mohamed Al-Mukhtar Al-Nour, the legal advisor to Hemedti, confirmed in an interview with Al Jazeera that Hemedti is personally leading military operations on the ground, mentioning that he met with him a week ago in the combat zones between Kordofan and Darfur states.¹⁰⁴

Al-Burhan and Hemedti: Leadership Styles through propaganda

To establish their legitimacy to govern Sudan, Al-Burhan and Hemedti use an unconventional propaganda tool: prophecy. Al-Burhan cites his father’s dream of him becoming the president of Sudan, while Hemedti draws on his sheikh’s prophecy, which states that he will extend his rule over Sudan and establish the long-awaited state of Junaid,¹⁰⁵ the unifying force of the Sahel Arab diaspora. Their propagandists employ other traditional propaganda techniques, yet the goal remains to inspire admiration and portray them as a “divine gift” to the entire country. Thus, Al-Burhan is called the “guru” by his supporters and an “Islamist agent” by his opponents, while Hemedti is depicted as the “defender of democracy” and a “ruthless mercenary.”

Al-Burhan: A guru or an Islamist agent?

Those who call Al-Burhan the “guru” believe he achieved a miracle by stopping an international plot to seize power in Sudan and destroy the SAF. @Alkahn_Burhan (the Guru Burhan) is an X account that promotes a pro-Burhan community. Although the account has few followers, its content is widely shared on social media. However, @Alkahn_Burhan has caused confusion by being interpreted in a religious context because “kahn” also means priest in Arabic. However, according to Bloom Social Analytics, the hashtag has generated 208 thousand activities, driven mainly by pro-SAF. Another X account celebrating Al-Burhan is #We_are_all_Al-Burhan, which

102. Telegram Post, RSF, available at: <https://t.me>.

103. “The Video Is from India and Does Not Show a Bombing That Targeted the Army’s Headquarters in Khartoum”, Misbar, May 21, 2025.

104. “A Rapid Support Forces Official: Hemedti Is Leading the Battles on the Ground”, Al Jazeera, June 1, 2025.

105. Referring to the Sahel Arabs, who share a common ancestor, Junaid.

gained attention especially after the U.S. imposed sanctions on him in January 2025.¹⁰⁶

Al-Burhan's supporters often portray him as an approachable leader with strong community connections and respect from his soldiers. This image is shared through widely circulated photos and videos of Al-Burhan sharing a simple meal with locals, sipping coffee under a tree, surrounded by young people and soldiers, or visiting a grieving family to offer condolences.

Figure 13: Photos went viral on social media, featuring similar commentary: Al-Burhan breaking protocol to connect with the people and the Al-Burhan trend



Source: Alburhan trend, Sudania 24 TV.

Counter-propagandists portray Al-Burhan today as an isolated leader grappling with pressures from Islamist groups while navigating regional and international challenges that could threaten his hold on power. In his speeches, Al-Burhan often denounces Somoud, calling them unpatriotic, which his opponents interpret as signs of his anxiety about losing power to political rivals. Social media erupted with widespread outrage over Al-Burhan's statement, "The time for blocking roads and for those who used to say that glory belongs to the 'car tires' is over. Today, glory belongs only to the gun",¹⁰⁷ which is seen by FFC/Somoud and their supporters as opposing the December revolution. The phrase "Glory to the car tires" gained popularity during protests against the ousted President Omar al-Bashir's regime, as protesters used to burn tires. Following Al-Burhan's remarks in April 2025, both hashtags "Glory to car tires" and "December will remain and will prevail" trended on social media.

106. "Treasury Sanctions Leader of Sudanese Armed Forces and Weapons Supplier", U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 16, 2025.

107. "Sudan Army Chief Draws Fire for Praising 'Gun' Over Peaceful Protest", Sudan Tribune, April 30, 2025, available at: <https://sudantribune.com>.

Hemedti: A ruthless mercenary or a democrat?

Hemedti’s propagandists portray him as the vanguard of the December 2018 revolution. The hashtags “#Guardians_Of_The_Glorious_Revolution” and “#Battle_For_Democracy” are the most widely used by the RSF across all its social media platforms.

Additionally, Hemedti’s social media team attempts to portray him as humble by emphasizing his simple background and wisdom. However, the same label is often used to criticize his lack of formal education. Videos showing Hemedti struggling to read and misuse words are common on social media. The Joe Show, an Egyptian satirical political program with over four million followers, has become popular among Sudanese by mocking Hemedti’s limited intellectual abilities.

In his Kadamol,¹⁰⁸ Hemedti’s populist speeches, delivered through televised or audio means, are full of contradictions, making it difficult for RSF propagandists to maintain a consistent narrative. In his video speeches, the image of Hemedti wearing a Kadamol, meant to inspire respect among his fighters and followers, instead made some see it as “the return of a Janjaweed” and feel repulsed.

Figure 14: Hemedti’s recent appearance wearing a Kadamol contrasts with his propagandists’ efforts to portray him as a political leader



Sources: [Aljazeera.net](https://www.aljazeera.net), March 15, 2025, Voice of Africa January 6, 2024 (www.voafrica.com) and Radio Dabanga, January 7 2024 (www.dabangasudan.org).

108. The traditional scarf face covering worn by desert nomads across the Sahel to protect against sand and dust. In Sudan, it is linked with the RSF fighters.

Impact of propaganda

The propaganda war in Sudan has severely impacted every aspect of Sudanese life, whether socially, economically, or politically. It has fueled racial and cultural hatred, polarized public opinion, spread hate speech, and complicated peace efforts.

Political impact

Propaganda from SAF and RSF supporters prolongs the war by hindering peace efforts, as they spread divisive discourse, hate speech, and exploit regional and tribal sensitivities, deeply polarizing Sudanese society. The hashtag #Bel_Bes, which promotes a military solution, attracted 89,000 activities between January and July 2025, while the hashtag #No_to_War only received 4,000 activities during the same period. For now, propaganda is being used to support the war rather than to achieve lasting peace. Omar Ismail¹⁰⁹ states that “Beyond the inflammatory rhetoric of the warring factions, the deep polarization between the two camps has fractured Sudanese society at every level—fueling the conflict rather than resolving it.” RSF-aligned groups have rallied behind the call to dismantle the Old Sudan, while SAF supporters march under the banner of a so-called War of Dignity. Both slogans have become symbolic blindfolds, ignoring the immense human suffering, national devastation, and the looming threat of Sudan’s disintegration.

Any discussions about peace initiatives are targeted by propagandists from both sides, who intensify their activities by using hashtags to oppose a potential ceasefire and promote widespread arming of civilians, as shown by Arabi Facts Hub in July 2023,¹¹⁰ with #Ceasefire_is_Treason used particularly by SAF supporters.

The polarization rhetoric based on tribal and regional identities has caused deep divisions within political parties and civil society organizations, weakening them and limiting their influence and role in peace efforts. Civilian forces have become disparate, with unclear demands divided along political, ethnic, and regional lines, as well as among supporters or opponents of the war and those aligned with SAF or RSF. These divisions exist even within individual political parties. For example, the Umma Party, the country’s largest political group, is split among supporters of SAF, Somoud,

109. Omer Ismail was the former State Minister and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs from July 2020 to February 2021, then served as an Advisor to the Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok for Global Partnerships until October 2021. Phone interview on August 3rd, 2025.

110. “Sudan: Who Stands Behind the Campaign to Reject a Ceasefire?”, Arabica Facts Hub, July 19, 2023.

and Tasis: the acting party's chairman, Fadlallah Burma Nasir,¹¹¹ joined Tasis; Secretary-General al-Watheq al-Berair and Siddiq al-Sadiq al-Mahdi joined Somoud; Abdulrahman al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and Deputy Chairman Mohamed Abdallah al-Douma back SAF; while Deputy Chairwoman Mariam al-Sadiq al-Mahdi remains nonaligned.¹¹² The Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces (Tagadom), formed to unite as many Sudanese as possible, is also divided—some joined RSF under the name Tasis, while others rebranded as Somoud.

SAF propagandists fueled campaigns against the civilian force “Somoud” and made its members targets for insults and harassment. Social media is flooded with jokes and sarcasm about Somoud's leaders. For example, Abdalla Hamdok became a target of mockery, often depicted in edited images to imply he is influenced by the RSF. During the Somoud conference in London on October 30, 2024, Abdalla Hamdok needed police protection due to the outrage of Sudanese citizens. Although fabricated, the claim that British police arrested Hamdok for being the ‘biggest instigators of war in the country’ circulated widely and was praised.

Many Sudanese, especially from the central riverine regions, see the RSF's hashtag, “The old Sudan is crumbling, the new Sudan is advancing,” as an attack on their cultural heritage and values. Omer Ismail argues that “both SAF and RSF have weaponized propaganda by enlisting actors with hidden agendas who have prolonged the war and undermined Sudan's national cohesion. These include voices advocating for separatist entities like the “River and Sea State” that intentionally exclude Darfur, as well as those championing a so-called “New Sudan” by vilifying the central riverine populations, often derogatorily called “State 56.”

Humanitarian impact

The most severe consequence of war propaganda is the threat it poses to vulnerable people caught between the SAF and RSF fire. Currently, the worst humanitarian crisis is happening in El-Fasher, which has been under siege by the RSF for a year. Both SAF and RSF are spreading false information about attacks on humanitarian organizations providing relief to civilians trapped in El-Fasher. In June and August 2025, United Nations aid convoys heading to El-Fasher were attacked;¹¹³ meanwhile, SAF and RSF are exchanging accusations about these operations. In addition, RSF propagandists are spreading false news about safe routes out of the city to

111. A former army general from the Misseriya tribe of South Darfur.

112. “Sudan's Umma Party Risks Split After Leader Fires Top Deputies”, Sudan Tribune, August 9, 2025, available at: <https://sudantribune.com>.

113. “WFP/UNICEF Humanitarian Aid Convoy Carrying Life-Saving Supplies Attacked in Sudan's North Darfur”, UNICEF, June 3, 2025, available at www.unicef.org.

lure and kill civilians using various pretenses, known on social media as the “safe passages trap”.¹¹⁴

The tactical propaganda of claims and counterclaims about territorial conquest is worsening the humanitarian crisis because it impacts people’s displacement. Since the war started, people have relied on sharing information on social media to escape war zones or prepare to defend their villages. Troop withdrawals on both sides are always denied and often accompanied by false information that endangers lives. For example, while the SAF announced the complete recapture of Khartoum, the RSF continued to control Al-Salha, a large area in southern Omdurman, imposing a stifling siege on the population, using civilians as human shields, and committing one of the bloodiest massacres in the country.¹¹⁵

As efforts to rebuild Khartoum begin and the government encourages people to return, the RSF propagandists flood social media with claims that Khartoum is uninhabitable due to the use of dangerous chemical weapons by the SAF, along with manipulated photos aimed at preventing residents from returning. Beam Reports identified two instances of false information: a statement attributed to the Sudanese Forensic Doctors Syndicate claiming that Khartoum is uninhabitable, and a warning from the head of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) advising citizens not to return to Khartoum.¹¹⁶ This campaign has sparked anxiety and panic among both current residents of Khartoum and those planning to return.

114. Yacin Ahmed, X (Twitter) post, “A Video Shows How the RSF Treated Citizens Leaving El Fasher: Torture, Humiliation, and Degradation. And After All This, the Mouthpieces of the RSF’s Allies Are Demanding That Citizens Leave El Fasher”, September 9, 2025.

115. “Activists Accuse Sudan’s RSF of Omdurman Massacre; Paramilitary Group Denies”, Sudan Tribune, April 27, 2025, available at: <https://sudantribune.com>.

116. “Research on Chemical Weapons in Sudan”, The Beam Reports, available at: www.beamreports.com. The two reports are available at: www.beamreports.com and www.beamreports.com.

Conclusion

With the outbreak of war, mainstream media has been disrupted, and social media has stepped in to fill the information gap, resulting in major shifts in how information is created and shared. Control over information is no longer exclusive. Sudanese social media interactions have become highly politicized and plagued with rivalries, misinformation, and propaganda. The RSF has invested substantial resources in building a wide network of digital influencers. Meanwhile, the SAF has leveraged the support of its backers, especially journalists and mainstream media outlets. Key players in this online battle are often based outside the country, living among large refugee communities in neighboring nations or within the diaspora in Europe and the United States.

Although the SAF and RSF propaganda have reached a large audience, their respective campaigns faced notable setbacks. While the RSF failed to convince the Sudanese people that they are fighting for democracy or opposing Islamists and the previous regime of al-Bashir, the SAF failed to deliver a clear message that promotes a dignified peace while also supporting a dignified war. The RSF's violent actions—including killings, rapes, looting, and occupying civilian homes—are inconsistent with its claims of being democratic. Their anti-Islamism propaganda also falls short, as it is widely known that the RSF and its leader, Hemedti, were key players in the former Islamist regime, and many members of the NCP under ex-President al-Bashir are now part of the RSF's close circle. Meanwhile, the SAF propaganda struggles to establish a clear communication message.

Social media has certainly introduced new ways to reach large audiences. However, the war of words has diminished the quality and credibility of information, turning social media into both a battleground and a propaganda tool with serious and immediate consequences, impacting people's lives and deepening the fragmentation of the Sudanese society.

Appendix

Sudan's media landscape¹¹⁷

Mainstream media in Sudan include various national and regional newspapers, radio stations, and TV channels, both publicly and privately owned. The National Radio and Television Corporation reaches a large audience, although it mainly broadcasts government content, with Omdurman Radio—the country's first station—being the most popular in rural areas. Although the war has significantly impacted the media sector, it faced major challenges even before the conflict began, which were mainly related to economic sustainability and media freedom.

Throughout history, Sudan has only experienced brief periods of press freedom. It often faces restrictive policies and a lack of diversity and free expression. The National Radio and Television Corporation, along with print outlets, worked closely with the NCP and the NISS, or their loyal individuals and institutions. After al-Bashir's regime was ousted, the media briefly experienced more freedom; however, after the October 25, 2021 coup, media control tightened again. Now, with the outbreak of war, the press faces major challenges, and the country continues to rank poorly in reports from various international organizations. For example, Sudan's media situation is described as 'very serious', and its rank has dropped from 149 in 2024 to 156th out of 180 countries in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders,¹²⁴ making it the fourth-worst country for press freedom in Africa.

However, in the age of social media and satellite TV, influential media outlets have expanded their reach. Mainstream international media, especially Arab satellite channels, maintain a strong presence, such as Al Jazeera, Al Hadeth, Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia, which have become important sources of information (and sometimes serve as propaganda tools) for Sudanese viewers.

117. *Sudan media landscape*, Reporters Without Borders, 2025.

The ten most influential SAF accounts on social media (January 1 to July 1, 2025)

Rank	Name	Type	Platform	Engagement
1	Bassioni Kamil Bassioni	Influencer	Facebook	4,69M
2	SAF official site	Government	Facebook	2,87M
3	Hassan Ismail	Journalist	Facebook	2,16M
4	Sudan News Agency	Media	Facebook	1,42M
5	Yasin Ahmed	Influencer	X	1,4M
6	Sudania 24 TV	Media	Facebook	1,07M
7	Blue Nile TV	Media	Facebook	695K
8	Sama Sudan	Media	Facebook	517K
9	Tayba TV	Media	Facebook	401K
10	Tayba TV	Media	YouTube	296K

Source: © Bloom Social Analytics.

The ten most influential RSF accounts on social media (January 1 to July 1, 2025)

Rank	Name	Type	Platform	Engagement
1	Sudan 360	Media	Facebook	83.6K
2	Asad Alkaks	Influencer	TikTok	73.7K
3	Genghis Khan	Influencer	TikTok	50K
4	Jedo Musa	Influencer	YouTube	49.9K
5	Ibrahim Hamdan	Influencer	TikTok	26.9K
6	Roaa Media Centre RMC	Media	X	25.1K
7	Al Jahizia	Media	TikTok	23.8K
8	Tasis	Government	Facebook	19.1K
9	SudanMix	Media	Facebook	13.1K
10	SudanMix	Media	YouTube	9.12K

Source: © Bloom Social Analytics.

Examples of influential RSF accounts (July 2025)

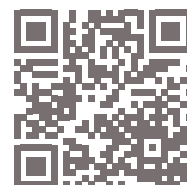
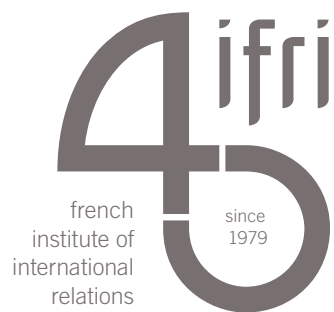
	Number of followers/subscribers		
	Facebook	X	YouTube
Moneim Suleiman	642,000		
Tsabih Mubarak	416,000	108,000	
Umm Ashwaq Hamid	66,000		
Jedo Musa	33,000	7,780	90,000
Bashar Tekezoo	17,000	10,900	6,200
Albasha Tbaeq	1,700	Account suspended	
Alrabie Abdelmoneim		Account suspended	50,600
Hiba Elwasila		16,700	
Elfadil Mansour		6,265	
Elfadil Eljubouri			40,000

Source: compiled by the author.

Examples of highly followed journalists and influencers supporting SAF (July 2025)

	Number of followers/subscribers		
	Facebook	X	YouTube
Alzool	2,200,000	801	75,300
Albashom	969,000	325,900	193,000
Al-Tahir Hassan Altoum	519,000	94,000	57,200
Alshorti Wad al-Mustafa	516,000		
Alinsirafi	435,000	102,300	101,000
Ali Mirghani	411,000	9,800	9,900
Hassan Ismail	400,000		
Muzamil Abuelgasim	306,000	14,000	7,700
Bsioni Kamil Bsioni	286,000	6,696	
Rishan Oshi	271,000	44,000	
Diaa el-Din Bilal	245,000	70,300	7,700
Osman Merghani	198,000	357,600	
Nagi Alkarashabi	27,000		
Alsadig Alrizaigi	23,000		
Ahmed Albalal Altayeb		94,500	

Source: compiled by the author.



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