

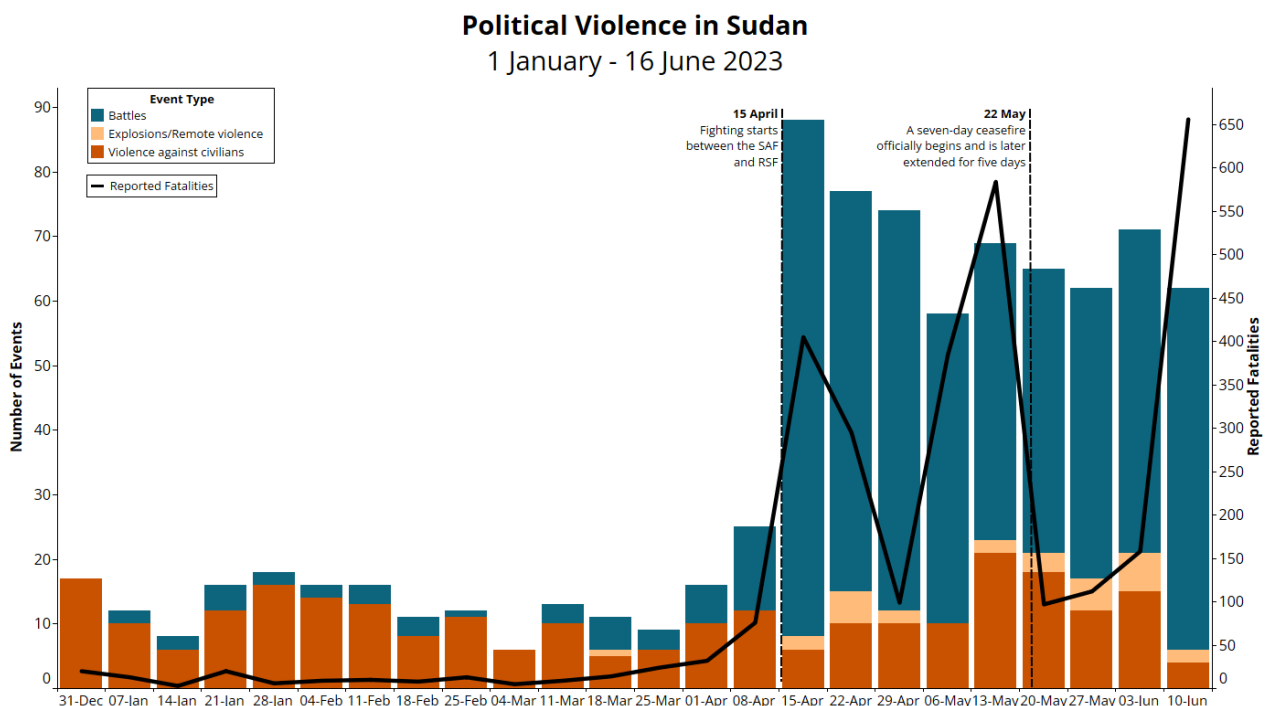
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Conflict Intensifies Following the Breakdown of Jeddah Talks

Since the full-scale war between the SAF and the paramilitary RSF began on 15 April, ACLED has recorded more than 600 political violence events and nearly 2,800 reported fatalities across Sudan. Despite multiple truce agreements between the warring parties, fighting has continued. While Khartoum state remains the epicenter of fighting, violence has been particularly deadly in Darfur region, where RSF-backed militia activity has been on the rise. The conflict has also expanded to and escalated in other areas, including South Kordofan where the Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) took over several SAF camps during the second week of June.

The seven-day ceasefire brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah on 20 May brought some respite after weeks of fighting,¹[Reuters, 'Sudan's army and paramilitary RSF sign seven-day ceasefire, US and Saudi Arabia say,' 20 May 2023](#) but fighting escalated again after the ceasefire expired (*see graph below*). The Jeddah ceasefire talks halted at the end of May after SAF delegates withdrew from the negotiations,²[Al Jazeera, 'Sudan army suspends participation in Jeddah ceasefire talks,' 31 May 2023](#) with the US adjourning the proceedings on 22 June.³[Al Jazeera, 'US delegation adjourns Sudan talks and mediation talks in Jeddah in limbo,' 22 June 2023](#) Two months into the conflict, violence in Sudan continues to spread, and more actors get involved, in what could be a sign of yet another protracted conflict.



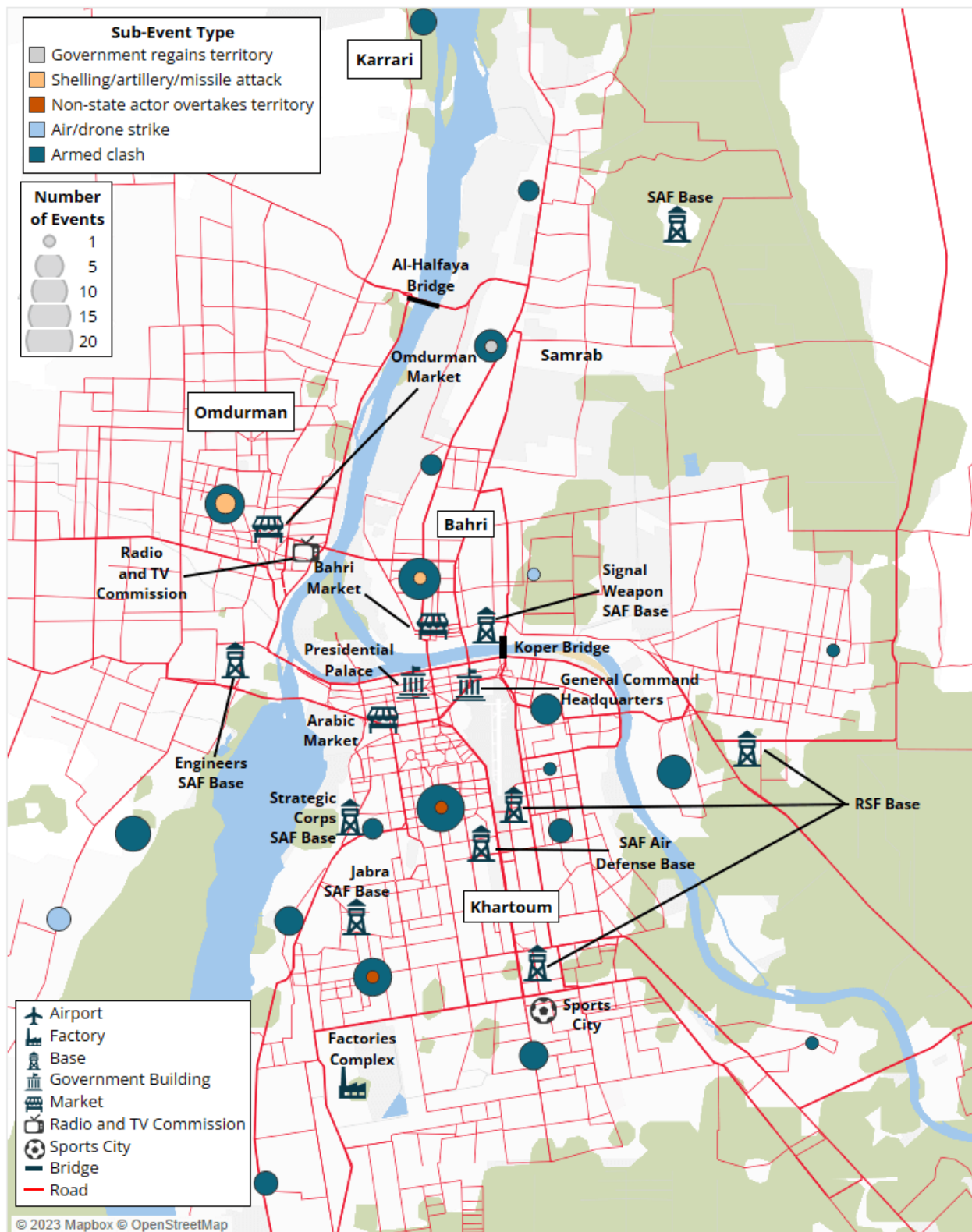
Unraveling the Conflict in Sudan's Capital

Khartoum's tri-city metropolitan area has been the main battleground in the ongoing conflict between the SAF and RSF. Since 15 April, nearly 65% of all recorded political violence events in the country occurred in Khartoum state, with over 820 reported fatalities, as the two warring factions fight over the capital's strategic locations and supply routes in a battle to gain the upper hand.

During the reporting period, the RSF took control of several locations in Khartoum (*see map below*). On 30 May, the RSF overtook the Strategic Corps SAF base, and over a week later, on 8 June, it took over the military weapons factories (al-Yarmouk Complex) after clashing with the SAF. Moreover, the RSF advanced west towards Omdurman to cut SAF supply routes between Engineers and Jabra SAF (Armored Corps) bases, also isolating the routes to the SAF-controlled area in General Command Headquarters and the Signal Weapon Corps base on both banks of the Nile river between Blue Nile and Koper bridges.⁴ [War Mapper, 'Control Map of Khartoum,' 31 May 2023](#) Clashes also took place in and around the Tayba RSF base, the Jabra SAF base, the Sports City RSF base, and the Coin Authority, where the RSF is stationed, in Khartoum, the Signal Weapon SAF base and al-Halfaya Bridge in Bahri, and the Wadi Seidna military airport and the Radio and Television Commission, where the RSF is stationed, in Omdurman. Most events reported in Khartoum involved airstrikes and artillery shelling, leading to the massive destruction of infrastructure and vital facilities.

Fighting Between the SAF and RSF in Khartoum

20 May - 16 June 2023



Following the expiration of the 24-hour truce on 11 June, the SAF launched a multi-front offensive in Khartoum, after the RSF attempted to attack the SAF on al-Halfaya bridge – which links Bahri and Omdurman – from the east of the bridge in Bahri. The SAF attacked the RSF from three directions: from Omdurman, Kadaro and Samrab, and al-Halfaya Bridge. The SAF, consequently, overtook the other side of al-Halfaya Bridge in Bahri. Meanwhile, the SAF attempted to advance west from Haj Yusuf on the outskirts of Khartoum, and south from al-Samarab, in order to gain control of Kafouri in Bahri. Both attacks, however, were repelled by the RSF. Elsewhere in

Khartoum, around the Jabra SAF base, the SAF advanced northward from Lamab towards al-Ramyla to strengthen the defense in the northwest of the base.

The SAF has encountered significant difficulties in engaging the RSF in street fighting, given RSF's decentralized structure and experience in urban warfare.⁵Michael Horton, 'Can the SAF Defeat the RSF in Sudan?', *The Jamestown Foundation*, 9 June 2023 This has resulted in the SAF adopting a defensive stance in its bases throughout greater Khartoum, while relying on airstrikes and heavy artillery shelling from the Jabra SAF base, Engineers Corps base, and Wadi Seidna military airport base. These have not only caused massive damage to the infrastructure but have also resulted in many civilian casualties.

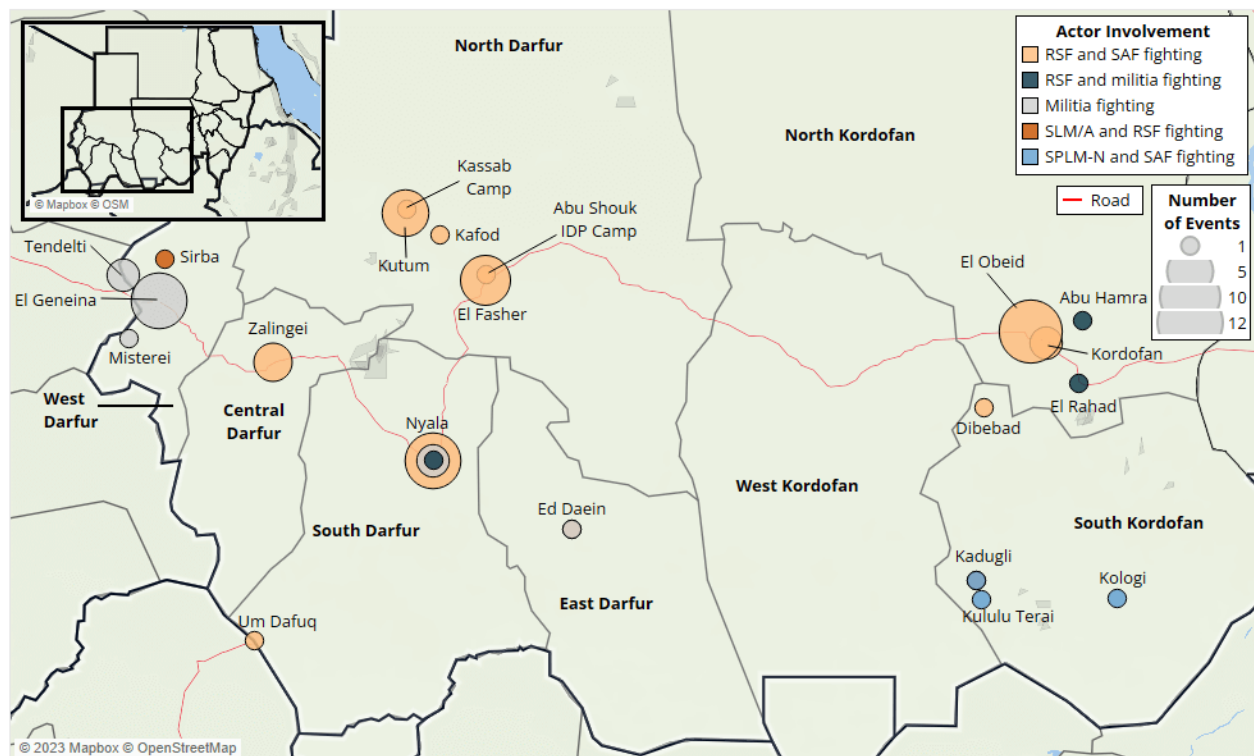
For its part, the RSF launched ground attacks on SAF bases, taking advantage of a higher number of soldiers deployed in Khartoum. Through these raids, the RSF succeeded in overwhelming the SAF before reinforcements from other bases could provide assistance. The SAF has attempted to mitigate its losses by deploying additional forces from other states to Khartoum, including transferring three SAF infantry divisions from Damazin, Sinja, and Kosti on 2 June.⁶Al Jazeera, 'Sudan army brings in reinforcements as it battles RSF in Khartoum,' 3 June 2023

Violence Expands and Intensifies Beyond Khartoum

Although fighting is mainly centered in the tri-city area of Khartoum, it has further expanded and intensified outside the capital, particularly in Darfur and Kordofan regions (*see map below*). In Darfur, several truce deals have collapsed, suggesting the volatile nature of the violence of the conflict in the region. In South Kordofan, the al-Hilu faction of the SPLM-N overtook army bases in several localities, raising concerns about the involvement of more armed groups in the violence and its expansion outside its current epicenters of Khartoum and Darfur.

Fighting in Darfur and Kordofan

20 May - 16 June 2023



Since the start of the conflict, West Darfur, in particular, has been experiencing a significant rise in the number of political violence events and reported fatalities. From 15 April to 16 June, ACLED records nearly 45 political violence events and at least 1,020 reported fatalities in West Darfur alone. RSF-backed militias have been involved in an increasing number of political violence events over the past four weeks, contributing to the intensification of the violence across the region. Violence has largely clustered in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur, which has turned into a hotbed of fighting between the RSF-backed Arab and the Masalit militias (*see map above*). Sudan's former leader, Omar al-Bashir, recruited from Arab tribes in the 2000s to repress non-Arab rebel groups in Darfur. Disputes between the two groups over land have driven conflict in the region.⁷[Michael Horton, 'Can the SAF Defeat the RSF in Sudan?,' The Jamestown Foundation, 9 June 2023](#)

Against this backdrop, West Darfur State Governor Khamis Abakar was abducted and killed on 14 June, likely by the RSF, although the latter denied the accusation.⁸[Mercy Juma, 'Sudan conflict: West Darfur governor killed after genocide claim,' BBC, 15 June 2023](#) Abakar, the head of the Sudanese Coalition Movement – a signatory to the 2020 Juba peace agreement – had accused the RSF of genocide for its sponsoring of violence in Darfur and called for international intervention.⁹[Zeinab Mohammed Salih and Jason Burke, 'Sudan: paramilitary forces blamed for assassination of West Darfur governor,' The Guardian, 15 June 2023](#) The RSF and allied Arab militiamen also ambushed a joint forces convoy consisting of 19 military vehicles of the Minni Minnawi-led faction of Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) near Sirba in West Darfur, reportedly killing at least four joint forces members, wounding 17 others, and arresting three.

In South Darfur, clashes broke out between the SAF and RSF in the capital, Nyala, after the RSF members did not receive their salaries from the Sudan Central Bank.¹⁰[Sudan Tribune, 'Clashes reignite between Sudanese army, RSF in South Darfur,' 18 May 2023](#) This marked an end to a fragile truce between the two parties in the city, brokered by local leaders at the end of April.¹¹[Radio Dabanga, 'Darfur update: clashes in El Geneina, extended truce in El Fasher, and popular initiatives in Nyala,' 25 April 2023](#) In addition, militias reportedly looted banks, including Islamic Bank, Blue Nile Bank, and Saudi Sudanese Bank in Nyala, triggering clashes with the SAF, which resulted in dozens of reported fatalities. In Buram, Habbaniyah and Salamat tribes signed a peace agreement, facilitated by Rizeigat on 25 May, after at least 45 people were killed as the SAF and Habbaniyah militiamen clashed with militiamen from the Salamat tribe over a looting incident on 17 May.

In North Darfur, clashes were reported in several locations across the state. Fighting mainly centered in the capital, El Fasher, and Kutum, which lies 120 kilometers northwest of El Fasher. In Kutum, clashes started on 30 May and expanded to the Kassab Camp on 4 June. Hundreds of civilians, including the mayor of Farok village in Kutum locality, were reportedly killed at the hands of the RSF in North Darfur. Fighting also continued in Zalingei in South Darfur, with the SAF claiming to have lifted a week-long siege on the city by the RSF.

Violence Escalates in Kordofan as Rebels Mobilize

Outside Darfur region, the conflict has taken a new turn as reports emerged of mobilization and armed activity by the al-Hilu-led faction of the SPLM-N. Recent reports indicate that al-Hilu forces successfully seized control of SAF bases in Kologi, Teis, Daldako, Um Suran, Hamra, Kululu Terai, and Jabal Abul in South Kordofan on 8 June. Meanwhile, clashes between the SAF and RSF were reported in the city in early June. The situation in South Kordofan had remained relatively calm in May, with just one political violence event recorded in the state that month. Around 8 June, the SAF reportedly repulsed an RSF attack on its base in Kadugli. In response, the al-Hilu-led faction of the SPLM-N claimed that it had besieged the city to safeguard civilians.¹²[Nafisa Eltahir, Khalid Abdelaziz, Adam Makary, & Maggie Michael, 'Sudan's western cities under fire as war spreads,' Reuters, 14 June 2023](#) The SAF has also been reported to arm and pay Popular Defence Forces (PDF) in North and South Kordofan, as well as Gedaref and Kassala, likely to fight against

the RSF. The PDF is a pro-government militia established shortly after the military coup by al-Bashir in 1989 to fight rebel groups in the country. It was disbanded in early June 2020 and integrated into the SAF as the 'Reserve Department.'¹³[Radio Dabanga, 'Popular Defence Forces integrated into Sudan army,' 2020](#) The expansion of the fighting and involvement of new armed groups further complicate the multifaceted crisis in Sudan and underscores the heightened risks faced by civilians across the country.

Fighting between the SAF and RSF also continued in North Kordofan. While violence mainly centers in El Obeid, other areas have also been affected. The RSF reportedly controls the roads connecting El Obeid to other towns.¹⁴[Reuters, 'Sudan's western cities under fire as war spreads,' 14 June 2023](#) On 30 May, the RSF overtook control of the Jebel Kordofan SAF base following clashes with the SAF, seizing the storage of weapons and ammunition. In June, multi-day clashes between the SAF and RSF in El Obeid resulted in nearly 230 reported fatalities.

Conflict Continues to Have a Devastating Impact on Civilians

According to the estimates by the Sudanese Doctors' Union, nearly 1,000 civilians have been killed since the start of the conflict.¹⁵[Xinhua, 'Death toll in Sudan's armed clashes climbs to 958: doctors' union,' 15 June 2023](#) Moreover, the International Organization for Migration estimates that over 2.5 million people have been displaced in Sudan since 15 April, with the number of displaced population having almost doubled over the past four weeks. After Khartoum, West Darfur has had the highest number of internally displaced people, with many also fleeing to neighboring Chad.¹⁶[International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix, 'DTM SudanSudan – Situation Report \(9\),' 20 June 2023](#) Civilians are facing a severe humanitarian and security crisis in El Geneina. RSF-allied Arab militias have been targeting and forcibly displacing Masalit tribespeople, resulting in civilian deaths and widespread destruction of infrastructure. Although the exact number of civilian casualties remains uncertain due to the weeks-long communications blackout in the city,¹⁷[Al Jazeera, 'Ethnic violence in Sudan raises genocide alarm as war rages on,' 13 June 2023](#) the West Darfur Doctors Union has estimated the death toll since 20 April to be in the hundreds, while activists report at least 1,100 civilian deaths in El Geneina since 24 April.¹⁸[Radio Dabanga, 'More than 1,100 dead in besieged El Geneina, West Darfur,' 12 June 2023](#) In a new report, the Dar Masalit Sultanate (Masalit native administration) has claimed more than 5,000 fatalities and at least 8,000 injuries since the start of the fighting in the city.¹⁹[Celine Alkhaldi, Mostafa Salem, and Ingrid Formanek, 'New killings reported in Darfur on second day of Sudan ceasefire,' CNN, 19 June 2023](#)

On 18 June, warring parties agreed on another three-day ceasefire with the mediation of the US and Saudi Arabia.²⁰[Aljazeera, 'Sudan's warring sides agree to new 72-hour ceasefire,' 17 June 2023](#) Ceasefire agreements, however, have had limited impact so far, and the RSF and SAF have been using them as opportunities to regroup, arm themselves, and launch new attacks that have claimed thousands of civilian lives and inflicted damage on infrastructure.