

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

SUDAN

MAY 9, 2026

T H E G D E L T P R O J E C T

SUDAN STRATEGIC UPDATE:

SECURING BORDERS, SHIFTING DIPLOMACY, & PROJECTING GOVERNANCE (MAY 2026)

1. THE MILITARY PIVOT: SEALING THE BLUE NILE BORDER

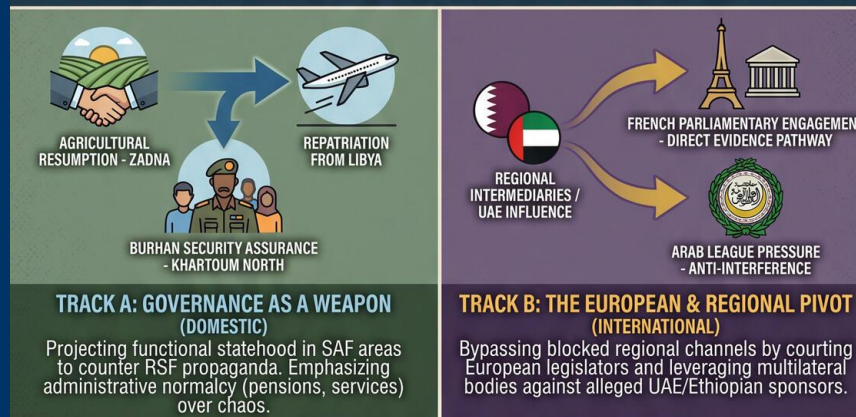
Tactical Breakthrough:

SAF clears strategic border zones, disrupting flow of drones and logistics to RSF and Joseph Touka forces.

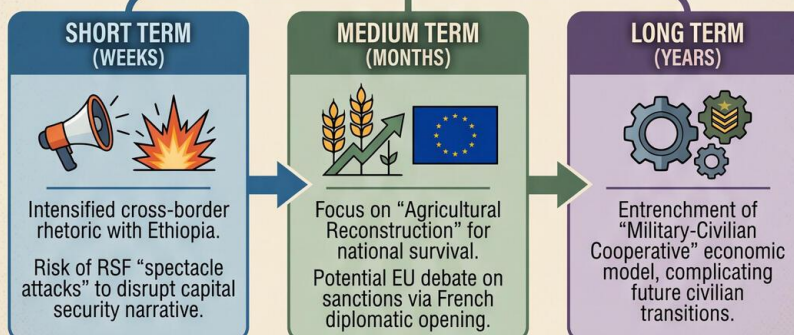
Goal: Physically sever foreign interference.



2. THE DUAL-TRACK OFFENSIVE: DOMESTIC NORMALIZATION VS. DIPLOMATIC REALIGNMENT



3. STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & IMPLICATIONS



KEY TAKEAWAY: SAF is leveraging military gains on the border to build a legal and diplomatic case against foreign interference while attempting to win the "hearts and minds" domestic war through administrative stabilization.

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SUDANESE ARMED FORCES
CONSOLIDATE STRATEGIC BORDER
ZONES WHILE NAVIGATING A
COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL
DIPLOMATIC REBALANCING
AGAINST REGIONAL
INTERFERENCE

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

On May 9, 2026, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) achieved a significant tactical breakthrough in the Blue Nile region, specifically the [clearing of Al-Kili](#), a strategic area on the outskirts of Al-Kurmuk. This operation, carried out by the 4th Infantry Division, targeted the combined forces of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia and the rebel forces of Joseph Touka. The victory is framed as a critical step in securing the southern border and disrupting supply lines that the SAF alleges originate from Ethiopia. This military momentum is being leveraged domestically to project a narrative of "normalization," with General Al-Burhan making high-profile public appearances in [Khartoum North \(Bahri\)](#) to reassure citizens that the capital remains secure and that the

"war of dignity" is nearing a favorable conclusion.

Diplomatically, the Transitional Sovereignty Council is engaged in a dual-track offensive. While Deputy Chairman Malik Agar attends the presidential inauguration in Djibouti to solidify [regional bloc support](#), Darfur Governor Minni Minnawi is hosting a French parliamentary delegation. This visit, led by Christophe Macron, represents a rare and significant diplomatic opening to Europe, aimed at bypassing traditional regional intermediaries and directly presenting evidence of [militia atrocities](#) in El Fasher and Geneina to the French Parliament. This move seeks to pressure the international community to re-evaluate the role of the UAE, which Sudanese officials increasingly identify as the primary architect of the conflict's persistence.

Underpinning these developments is a concerted effort by state institutions to maintain the appearance of functional governance in SAF-controlled territories. This includes the [voluntary return](#) of Sudanese nationals from Libya, the launch of national agricultural initiatives in the Northern and River Nile states by Zadna International, and the continuation of routine administrative activities such as Arab Traffic Week. These efforts serve as a counter-narrative to RSF propaganda, which SAF analysts claim is currently focused on [psychological warfare](#) and spreading rumors of imminent escalations in Khartoum to destabilize public confidence.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Strategic Victory in Blue Nile Region:** The 4th Infantry Division and supporting forces successfully retook Al-Kili near Al-Kurmuk, inflicting heavy losses on [Joseph Touka's rebels](#) and RSF-aligned elements. This operation is vital for [securing the southern border](#) and stabilizing the Blue Nile axis.
- **Burhan's Public Security Assurance:** General Al-Burhan visited the Ad-Darushab area in Bahri, meeting with families of fallen soldiers and insisting that [Khartoum is safe](#) and stable. This appearance was designed to [refute rumors](#) of RSF breakthroughs or internal military fissures.
- **French Parliamentary Engagement:** A French delegation led by Christophe Macron visited Port Sudan to witness the humanitarian fallout. The delegation leader pledged to [convey atrocities](#) to the French Parliament and questioned the lack of European condemnation regarding [foreign support](#) for the militia.
- **Ethiopian and UAE Complicity Allegations:** New reports and satellite analysis discussed by Sudanese media highlight the [Asosa base in Ethiopia](#) as a hub for drone operations and logistics for the RSF. Evidence was presented regarding [Ethiopian hospitals](#) treating RSF combatants.
- **Repatriation from Libya:** The second flight of the [voluntary return program](#) arrived in Port Sudan, carrying 166 citizens. The state intends to repatriate at least 1,000 citizens to demonstrate [returning stability](#).

- **Agricultural and Infrastructure Resumption:** Zadna International Company conducted a [tour of projects](#) in the Northern and River Nile states, emphasizing the necessity of agricultural production for [economic security](#).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Deputy Chairman Malik Agar traveled to Djibouti to participate in the [presidential inauguration](#), seeking to leverage the event for bilateral meetings regarding Sudan's status in regional organizations.
- **Economic Security & Food Supply:** The National Cooperative Corporation and Zadna are leading efforts to stabilize [food prices](#) and ensure the flow of essential goods, specifically through [market inspections](#) of livestock for the upcoming holidays.
- **State Capacity & Social Services:** The National Pension and Social Insurance Fund in the Blue Nile region reported [uninterrupted payments](#) throughout the conflict, including to displaced persons, to maintain [social order](#).
- **Information Warfare:** State media emphasized the role of "psychological warfare" by the RSF, specifically [refuting rumors](#) of chemical weapon use or imminent instability in Khartoum, characterizing such reports as [fabricated by RSF](#) media cells.
- **Security Architecture:** The Arab Traffic Week was utilized as a platform to demonstrate the [resumption of policing](#) functions, with a 50% [reduction in fees](#) for administrative transactions to encourage citizen compliance.

- **Corruption & Legal Warfare:** Reports detailed the existence of [Daqris prison in Nyala](#), where RSF forces are accused of extrajudicial killings and torture, signaling a Sudanese intent to pursue [international investigations](#) for war crimes.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Governance activities focused on executive decrees and administrative adjustments rather than formal legislative sessions, given the transitional and wartime status of the administration. Key actions included the [temporary reduction of fees](#) for state services and the formalizing of repatriation agreements.

- **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**

- **Administrative Fee Reduction Decree:** A directive issued during Arab Traffic Week providing a 50% discount on [all traffic transactions](#) and licensing to facilitate civilian normalization.
- **Pension Settlement Protocol:** Frameworks for the [settlement of pension dues](#) specifically targeting displaced civil servants in the Blue Nile region.

- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**

- **Sudanese-Belarusian Joint Ministerial Committee:** Conclusion of the [5th session](#) focusing on bilateral trade and industrial cooperation.
- **Arab League Extraordinary Briefing:** Preparation for a [Sunday meeting](#) called by Sudan to address Ethiopian "aggression" and RSF support.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Internationalization of the Blue Nile Axis

The recapture of Al-Kili is more than a local military victory; it is a tactical pivot toward addressing foreign interference. The link between the rebel leader [Joseph Touka](#) and the Ethiopian border is being emphasized to build a legal and diplomatic case against Addis Ababa. Sudanese analysts are increasingly vocal about [satellite data](#) showing technical vehicles and drones transiting through Ethiopia to RSF units. By securing the border regions, the SAF aims to physically sever these [supply lines](#) while simultaneously presenting the "smoking gun" of foreign involvement to international bodies like the [Arab League](#).

Normalization as a Weapon of War

There is a visible trend in state media to highlight mundane administrative successes—such as [traffic safety weeks](#), [maternal health workshops](#), and [hajj pilgrimages](#)—as evidence of state resilience. This "administrative normalcy" is intended to contrast with the [chaos and looting](#) reported in RSF-held areas. By reducing [transactional fees](#) and ensuring [pension payments](#), the SAF-led government is attempting to secure the "hearts and minds" of the civilian population, framing the RSF not as a political alternative but as a destructive force that provides no governance. This theme is echoed in [General Al-Burhan's visits](#) to neighborhoods in Khartoum, where he presents himself as a commander accessible to the people, contrary to the [hidden status](#) of RSF leadership.

Pivoting Diplomatic Engagement to Europe

The visit of the [French parliamentary delegation](#) marks a critical shift in Sudanese foreign policy. Having felt marginalized by certain regional mediators, the Sudanese government is now courting [European legislative voices](#) to influence executive policies in Paris and Brussels. The explicit naming of the [UAE as a sponsor](#) of the militia by French delegates in Port Sudan suggests this strategy may be gaining traction. This trend points to an upcoming period of "diplomatic lawfare," where Sudan will use sympathetic Western legislators to bypass blocked diplomatic channels and push for [international sanctions](#) against RSF financiers.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect an intensification of cross-border rhetoric between Sudan and Ethiopia following the [Arab League meeting](#). Military operations in the Blue Nile will likely push further toward [Al-Kurmuk](#) to finalize the closure of the southern border. In Khartoum, the RSF may attempt "spectacle attacks" or [psychological operations](#) to counter Al-Burhan's claims of capital security.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The focus will likely shift to the "Agricultural Reconstruction" phase. Success in the [agricultural projects](#) in the Northern and River Nile states will be critical for national survival and preventing famine in SAF-held areas. If the [French parliamentary mission](#) leads to a formal report, it could trigger a debate in the European Union regarding sanctions against entities [supporting the RSF](#).

Long Term (1-5 Years): Sudan's internal security architecture is being fundamentally reshaped into a "military-civilian cooperative"

model, as seen with the increasing role of the [National Cooperative Corporation](#). This suggests that even after a potential peace settlement, the military's role in the national economy and social safety net will be [structurally entrenched](#), potentially complicating future transitions to purely civilian governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The increasing evidence of [cross-border drone flights](#) from Ethiopia necessitates a formal monitoring mechanism to prevent a wider regional conflict between Khartoum and Addis Ababa.
- The [French parliamentary visit](#) provides a roadmap for other Western nations to engage with the Sudanese state on a legislative level to assess [war crimes](#) without fully committing to a change in executive diplomatic stance.
- Repatriation efforts from Libya should be supported by international NGOs to ensure that [returning citizens](#) have access to the social services and food security [claimed by the state](#).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- The Northern and River Nile states are emerging as the most [stable regions](#) for investment in agriculture and livestock, backed by state-led companies like [Zadna](#).
- Supply chain risks remain high for Gum Arabic and other [high-value exports](#) due to conflict in the [Hashab belt](#) in Kordofan, though efforts to [re-establish production](#) in safe zones are underway.

- Regulatory compliance in SAF-held areas is becoming increasingly centralized through [military-industrial channels](#), requiring investors to navigate a landscape where [national security](#) and economic activity are deeply intertwined.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a

richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.