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## **SAF-affiliated Islamist militia detonates explosives inside mosque**

**[CSW](#) (27.03.2024) - An Islamist militia affiliated with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) [vandalised and detonated explosives](#) inside the Sheikh Qarib Allah mosque in Omdurman, Sudan last week.**

The mosque is in an area that has been under SAF control since early March 2024, and a reliable source confirmed that prior to this date it had not been damaged in any exchanges of fire between the SAF and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with whom the SAF is in conflict. Video footage posted on 20 March shows significant damage to the inside of the mosque from the explosives.

SAF-affiliated media has accused the RSF of digging up shrines at the mosque in an effort to provoke religious tensions; however, the mosque has [confirmed](#) that its shrines have not been touched.

Islamist militias affiliated with the SAF, particularly the Al-Bara bin Malik Brigade, have been empowered by the ongoing war. On 12 March 2024 – a week before the attack on the mosque – SAF soldiers supported by a significant number of the brigade [seized](#) control of the Sudanese state broadcaster's headquarters from the RSF, and militia men were reportedly overheard [chanting](#) about Sudan becoming 'an Islamic state only'.

SAF soldiers are also responsible for other [egregious violations](#). Video footage posted on social media on 15 February shows troops in SAF uniform parading in a street with decapitated heads while chanting ethnic slurs, and in a separate incident, hanging a corpse in a car and appearing to skin it. Another video shows a group of them covering a civilian's face and threatening him with a knife while asking him about his religion.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: ***'CSW condemns the attack on the Sheikh Qarib Allah mosque and the continuing severe violations being perpetrated by the SAF and its affiliated Islamist militias. These incidents highlight the risk of Sudan's evolution towards an Islamic State (IS) model if the war persists and these militias become more powerful. CSW continues to call for a full and comprehensive ceasefire between all warring parties, and urges the international community to assist wherever possible in bringing an end to the violence, while ensuring a significant role for civil society in discussions on a post-conflict Sudan.'***

### **Note to Editors:**

1. The RSF and SAF have been [in conflict](#) since 15 April 2023, when violence erupted as the two forces were [due to merge](#) in line with an internationally supported framework agreement on a transition to democracy. Hundreds of civilians have been killed, and there are numerous reports of widespread sexual violence,

looting, the occupation of homes and public buildings, summary executions, mass graves and burned villages.

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## **Evangelical church set on fire by the Rapid Support Forces in Wad Madani**

**[CSW](#) (15.01.2024) - A church in Wad Madani, Gezira State, Sudan, was set on fire and partially destroyed by members of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 12 January.**

The Evangelical Church in Wad Madani is the biggest in Gezira State, and one of the oldest since it was built in 1939. It is considered a high value target, and is next door to an Evangelical school that the previous regime attempted to seize.

CSW sources report that the church was empty at the time of the attack and suggest that the only way an attacker would have been able to break into the building and set it on fire would have been with the knowledge and permission of the RSF, who completely control the area.

The RSF expanded its military operations in Gezira State in December 2023. On 16 December forces [attacked](#) a Coptic monastery in Wad Madani and used it as a military base. Several members of the church were held captive in the monastery, but were later released.

By 18 December the RSF had taken full control of the state, and since then there have been reports of serious human rights violations, including the killing of civilians, attacks on hospitals, and the looting of homes.

The RSF has been responsible for attacks on churches in other states across Sudan throughout the course of the ongoing conflict. On 17 April 2023 suspected RSF fighters [seized](#) an Anglican church in central Khartoum for use as a military base. Forty-two people who were sheltering inside the church, including the Archbishop and his family, were forced to leave the building, and several were physically assaulted. On 14 May the RSF [forcibly evacuated](#) all priests, including the Bishop of Khartoum and South Sudan, from St Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church in Khartoum in order to use the premises as a military base.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: '***CSW condemns this latest attack on the Evangelical Church in Wad Madani, which takes place amid severe and ongoing human rights violations across Gezira State and other parts of Sudan. We call on the RSF to immediately end the escalation in violations which may amount to atrocity crimes, and insist that all warring parties must conclude a full and comprehensive ceasefire. We also continue to call for the international community to assist wherever possible in bringing an end to the violence, including by ensuring those responsible for human rights violations and atrocity crimes are held to account, and penalising nations or entities that effectively aid and abet the commission of these violations by funding or arming the belligerents.***'

### **Footnote**

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there are numerous reports of widespread sexual violence, looting, the occupation of homes and public buildings, summary executions, mass graves and burned villages.

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