

# **Systematic Arson Attacks Mark Next Phase of Mass Atrocities in El-Fasher**

8 October 2025

**Yale** SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
*Humanitarian Research Lab*

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This report was independently produced by the Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab. Learn more at <https://medicine.yale.edu/lab/khoshnood/>.

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## I. Key Findings

### **Systematic Arson Attacks in Daraja Oula**

The Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) assesses that Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has conducted systematic arson attacks in Daraja Oula neighborhood near Naivasha Market. Yale HRL identifies a pattern of thermal (fire) damage consistent with systematic arson attacks to homes in the north part of Daraja Oula neighborhood in El-Fasher in satellite imagery collected on 8 October 2025. An estimated 1,700 square meters are affected by arson. This arson damage is in one of the few remaining areas with civilians in El-Fasher, near Naivasha market in the northwest quadrant of El-Fasher. Yale HRL identified a similar pattern of attack on 18 September 2025 in Abu Shouk IDP Camp less than 1 km away from the damage observed in satellite imagery captured today.<sup>1</sup> Yale HRL assesses that RSF is conducting systematic arson attacks targeting civilian areas and performing house-to-house clearance operations on an apparent ethnic basis.

While this systematic arson attack does not currently cover large swaths of neighborhoods, this pattern of damage is consistent with RSF's known pattern of attack on ethnically Zaghawa, Fur, Masalit, and other non-Arab communities. RSF has previously conducted systematic arson attacks with house-to-house clearance operations targeting civilian areas throughout this conflict. This was recently observed: in Zamzam Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp when RSF captured and razed much of the IDP camp in April 2025;<sup>2</sup> in villages across Darfur including 100+ villages in North Darfur since April 2024;<sup>3</sup> and in the eastern half of El-Fasher between April – July 2025.<sup>4</sup>

### **Shelter and Community Kitchen Repeatedly Bombarded, Market Attacked**

RSF has repeatedly targeted a shelter with a community kitchen in Daraja Oula neighborhood, El-Fasher. Yale HRL identifies repeated bombardment at a structure that was operating as both shelter and one of the few remaining community kitchens in El-Fasher. The roof of a structure appears damaged in satellite imagery collected between 27 and 30 September 2025; another structure in the same facility appears damaged in satellite imagery between 30 September and 4 October 2025. Open sources reported that this shelter and community kitchen was attacked on 30 September 2025, killing at least 6 people and wounding at least 23 others.<sup>5</sup> Local media and other open sources have reported near-continual bombardment of civilian gathering sites in recent days and weeks.<sup>6</sup>

Community kitchens operate as mutual aid organizations that feed their communities. They are critical resources to a population that has been under famine conditions for over a year, as has been the case for the Abu Shouk IDP Camp<sup>7</sup> immediately proximate to Daraja Oula. Due to a lack of food, very few community kitchens remain operational and many regularly report closing due to lack of supplies.<sup>8</sup>

Yale HRL also corroborates damage to Abu Qurun Market in Daraja Oula neighborhood in North Darfur. Open sources, including videos possibly taken from drones during the attack, report that RSF conducted a drone attack on 27 September 2025, killing at least 7 people and injuring at least 20 people.<sup>9</sup>

### **RSF Closes Berm: El-Fasher is Walled-In**

RSF has fully entrapped El-Fasher: there is now a nearly continuous 57km earthen wall (berm) that encircles the city. RSF has further reinforced their control point at Mellit Gate in the north of El-Fasher, one of the four total exits out of the city. Local media and open sources continue to report that the few people who survive the flight to Tawilah from El-Fasher through these control points report RSF extortion, extrajudicial detentions and disappearances, extrajudicial executions of men and boys, and sexual assaults of women and girls; survivors report that people collapse and die en route to Tawilah. The path to Tawilah takes days, and survivors report that among the dead bodies are those with gunshot wounds,<sup>10</sup> which may be consistent with attack after exiting the city.

### **RSF Logistics and Supplies**

RSF maintains sophisticated logistics capabilities with advanced weapons and materiel arriving in El-Fasher. Satellite imagery collected near RSF-captured Zamzam IDP Camp and on the B-26 road between El-Fasher and Zamzam IDP Camp shows two mounted technical vehicles heading toward El-Fasher and two armored vehicles at a control point at the entrance to Zamzam in satellite imagery collected on 7 October 2025. Two heavy equipment transports (HETs) are visible: one heading north toward El-Fasher and the other positioned south toward Zamzam along the B-26 road. RSF conducted a multidirectional ground attack on 7 October 2025 from the north/northeast and southwest of El-Fasher.<sup>11</sup>

## **II. Human Security Analysis**

Yale HRL assesses that the occurrence of targeted arson on residential areas is of extreme concern as it indicates an intent by RSF to commit house-to-house clearance operations in areas with a known non-Arab population. These attacks are consistent with RSF's more than 2.5 year pattern of ethnically targeted clearance operations of non-Arab communities in territories it controls. Yale HRL expects these initial incidents to grow in number and severity as RSF continues to take control of more of the city of El-Fasher. Given that El-Fasher is now surrounded entirely by earthen walls, or berms, the occurrence of these types of attacks represents a worst-case scenario for civilians still trapped in the city and unable to escape.

### III. Methodology

Yale HRL utilizes data fusion methodologies of open source and remote sensing data analysis. Yale HRL produced this report through the cross-corroboration of open source data, including social media, local news reporting, multimedia, and other reports, and remote sensing data, including satellite imagery and thermal sensor data. Researchers analyzed open source data across social media, news reports, and other publicly available sources to identify, chrono- and geolocate, and verify incidents. In limited cases, sources that contain personally identifiable information that could lead to targeting are redacted for human security protection; accredited media and researchers can contact [hrl.comms@yale.edu](mailto:hrl.comms@yale.edu) for access to the full set of unredacted sources.

Analysts assess the credibility and reliability of open source data based on a source's level of detail, past credibility, and the corroboration of other independent sources. Remote sensing and satellite imagery analysis relies on multi-temporal change detection, which involves the comparison of two or more satellite images of the same area captured at different times to detect differences in coloration, visual properties, and presence, absence, or positional change of objects across the images.

Place names were identified using UN P-codes obtained via the United Nations Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) and International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Sudan. This baseline was then verified and informed through open source analysis by Yale HRL's analysts with relevant cultural and linguistic skills.

#### Limitations

There are significant limitations to the data fusion methodology. The information environment in Sudan does not have the breadth of data available in other locations and there is likely a significant reporting bias for those who provide open source reporting. The tools and techniques present significant challenges to assess activities such as extrajudicial detention, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), and conflict-related casualties, particularly in environments with limited data. Satellite imagery analysis is limited by available imagery over time and space. Available nadir angles of satellite imagery can produce challenges to assess structural damage, until multiple angles and ground-level photographic and video materials emerge to help inform the analysis. Image resolution level can also limit the analyst's ability to perceive the full extent of damage present.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond, Nathaniel A. and Caitlin Howarth et al. "SPECIAL REPORT El-Fasher Falling, RSF Controls Abu Shouk IDP Camp." 18 September 2025. Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health: New Haven. <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/45e77af9-a3cb-4bae-9bc2-61efe1d1595f> archived at <https://perma.cc/SR2N-693J>

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<sup>2</sup> Caitlin N. Howarth, Kaveh Khoshnood, Nathaniel A. Raymond et al. “Human Security Emergency: RSF Forces Capture and Destroy Zamzam IDP Camp” 14 April 2025. Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health: New Haven. <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/60374754-f739-4ccc-9979-1823bcc537f6>

Caitlin N. Howarth, Kaveh Khoshnood, Nathaniel A. Raymond et al. “Human Security Emergency: Ongoing RSF Arson Attacks and Force Swell in Zamzam IDP Camp” 16 April 2025. Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health: New Haven; <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/d19933e5-1d04-4a4a-a494-7b22224555ff>

<sup>3</sup> Caitlin N. Howarth, Kaveh Khoshnood, Nathaniel A. Raymond et al. “Special Report: Fourteen Arson Attacks on Villages in North Darfur, 2-12 October 2024” 16 October 2024; <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/a1b264c5-985d-4987-a32b-74a8dab0c95b>; archived at <https://perma.cc/JMU6-A3Q6>

Howarth, Caitlin N., Kaveh Khoshnood, Nathaniel A. Raymond et al. “Twenty-Six Arson Attacks on Villages in Kutum Locality, North Darfur 12 October – 6 November 2024,” 7 November 2024. Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health: New Haven; <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/0d895704-fd30-4064-8d22-715d89451b0d>

<sup>4</sup> Caitlin N. Howarth, Kaveh Khoshnood, Nathaniel A. Raymond et al. “SPECIAL REPORT El-Fasher: State of Crisis.” 5 June 2024. Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health: New Haven, <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/207e8922-3c37-4476-97e9-505853311e3e>

<sup>5</sup> Sources HRL\_MMC\_131, HRL\_MMC\_132, and HRL\_MMC\_135 have been redacted for human security protection; Sudan War Monitor (@sudan\_war) “أستشهد 6 مواطنين وإصابة أكثر” X, formerly known as Twitter; [https://x.com/sudan\\_war/status/1973092143112548689](https://x.com/sudan_war/status/1973092143112548689), archived at <https://perma.cc/P82V-EU5Y>

<sup>6</sup> Sudan Tribune “مقتل 13 مدنيًا في قصف مدفعي للدعم السريع على أحياء الفاشر” Sudan Tribune. 6 October 2025. <https://sudantribune.net/article/305681>, archived at <https://perma.cc/65JM-N9AA>

Darfur24 “على مستشفى بالفاشر ”الدعم السريع” مقتل 8 أشخاص في قصف لـ” Darfur24. 8 October 2025. <https://www.darfur24.com/2025/10/08/%d9%85%d9%82%d8%aa%d9%84-8-%d8%a3%d8%b4%d8%ae%d8%a7%d8%b5-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d9%82%d8%b5%d9%81-%d9%84%d9%80%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%af%d8%b9%d9%85-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b3%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%b9-%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%89-%d9%85/>; archived at <https://perma.cc/YML2-2DQ5>

Sudan Tribune “الدعم السريع تعدم 3 (نازحين بينهم امرأة مسنة داخل مركز إيواء في الفاشر” Sudan Tribune. 7 October 2025. <https://sudantribune.net/article/305776>, archived at <https://perma.cc/LT3V-P3L9>

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<sup>7</sup> IPC, “Famine Review Committee: Sudan, December 2024,” Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). December 2024: Rome. Available at [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Famine\\_Review\\_Committee\\_Report\\_Sudan\\_Dec2024.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Review_Committee_Report_Sudan_Dec2024.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Source HRL\_MMC\_133 has been redacted for human security protection.

<sup>9</sup> Darfur24 “Seven Civilians Killed in Drone Strike on El Fasher Market” Darfur24, 29 September 2025. <https://www.darfur24.com/en/2025/09/29/seven-civilians-killed-in-drone-strike-on-el-fasher-market/>, archived at <https://perma.cc/X27L-VFZK>.

<sup>10</sup> Radio Dabanga “أجساد على الطريق.. الفاشر – طويلة، رحلة الموت فراراً من الموت” Radio Dabanga. 6 October 2025. <https://www.dabangasudan.org/ar/all-news/article/%d8%a3%d8%ac%d8%b3%d8%a7%d8%af-%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%89-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b7%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%82-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%81%d8%a7%d8%b4%d8%b1-%d8%b7%d9%88%d9%8a%d9%84%d8%a9%d8%8c-%d8%b1%d8%ad%d9%84%d8%a9>, archived at <https://perma.cc/2RY3-R7GQ>; Source HRL\_MMC\_134 has been redacted for human security protection.

<sup>11</sup> Darfur24 “اسقاط جوي جديد للجيش السوداني على الفاشر المحاصرة” Darfur24. 7 October 2025. <https://www.darfur24.com/2025/10/07/%d8%a7%d8%b3%d9%82%d8%a7%d8%b7-%d8%ac%d9%88%d9%8a-%d8%ac%d8%af%d9%8a%d8%af-%d9%84%d9%84%d8%ac%d9%8a%d8%b4-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b3%d9%88%d8%af%d8%a7%d9%86%d9%8a-%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%89-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%81%d8%a7/>, archived at <https://perma.cc/7CLW-A8AL>

# Daraja Oula Neighborhood, El-Fasher

## CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 04-08 OCTOBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 04 and 08 October 2025 over El-Fasher shows thermal scarring due to likely intentional razing affecting several structures in the Daraj Oula neighborhood.

Smoke plumes were detected from this location in low resolution Sentinel-2 imagery at on 07 October 2025 at 08:37 UTC.



04 October 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies  
Image enhanced with MGP Pro + HD image enhancement



08 October 2025 © 2025 Planet PBC

Community Kitchen, Daraja Oula, El-Fasher

**CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED  
BETWEEN 27-30 SEPTEMBER 2025 AND  
30 SEPTEMBER – 4 OCTOBER**

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 27 September and 30 September and again between 30 September and 04 October shows damage to a location identified as a community kitchen due to a likely munition impact in the Daraja Oula neighborhood of El-Fasher.



27 September 2025 © 2025 Planet Labs PBC



30 September 2025 © 2025 Planet Labs PBC



04 October 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies  
Image enhanced with MGP Pro + HD image enhancement

# Abu Qurun Market, Daraja Oula, El-Fasher

## CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE AND MUNITION IMPACT OBSERVED BETWEEN 27-30 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 27 and 30 September 2025 shows damage to a building due to a likely munition impact in the Daraja Oula neighborhood of El-Fasher.

A munition impact on the ground is also observed approximately 115 meters southeast of the damaged building.



27 September 2025 © 2025 Planet Labs PBC



30 September 2025 © 2025 Planet Labs PBC

## El-Fasher | 04 October 2025

Berm construction surrounding the city

Analysis of satellite imagery collected on 04 October 2025 shows the ongoing construction of a berm surrounding the city of El-Fasher has extended by approximately 5 km on the southwestern side of the city since 26 September 2025 and now measures 57 km in length.

The southwestern berm segment extends to the Golo reservoir where it connects to the western berm segment originally constructed between 14-24 July 2025.

As of 04 October 2025, the berm now appears to encircle the entirety of El-Fasher.



## Melit Gate, El-Fasher

### CHECKPOINT BERM REINFORCEMENT OBSERVED BETWEEN 26 SEPTEMBER AND 08 OCTOBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 26 September and 08 October 2025 over the northern access point of El Fasher shows that a checkpoint created in a berm gap at the Melit Gate has been reinforced with semi-circular berm extensions.

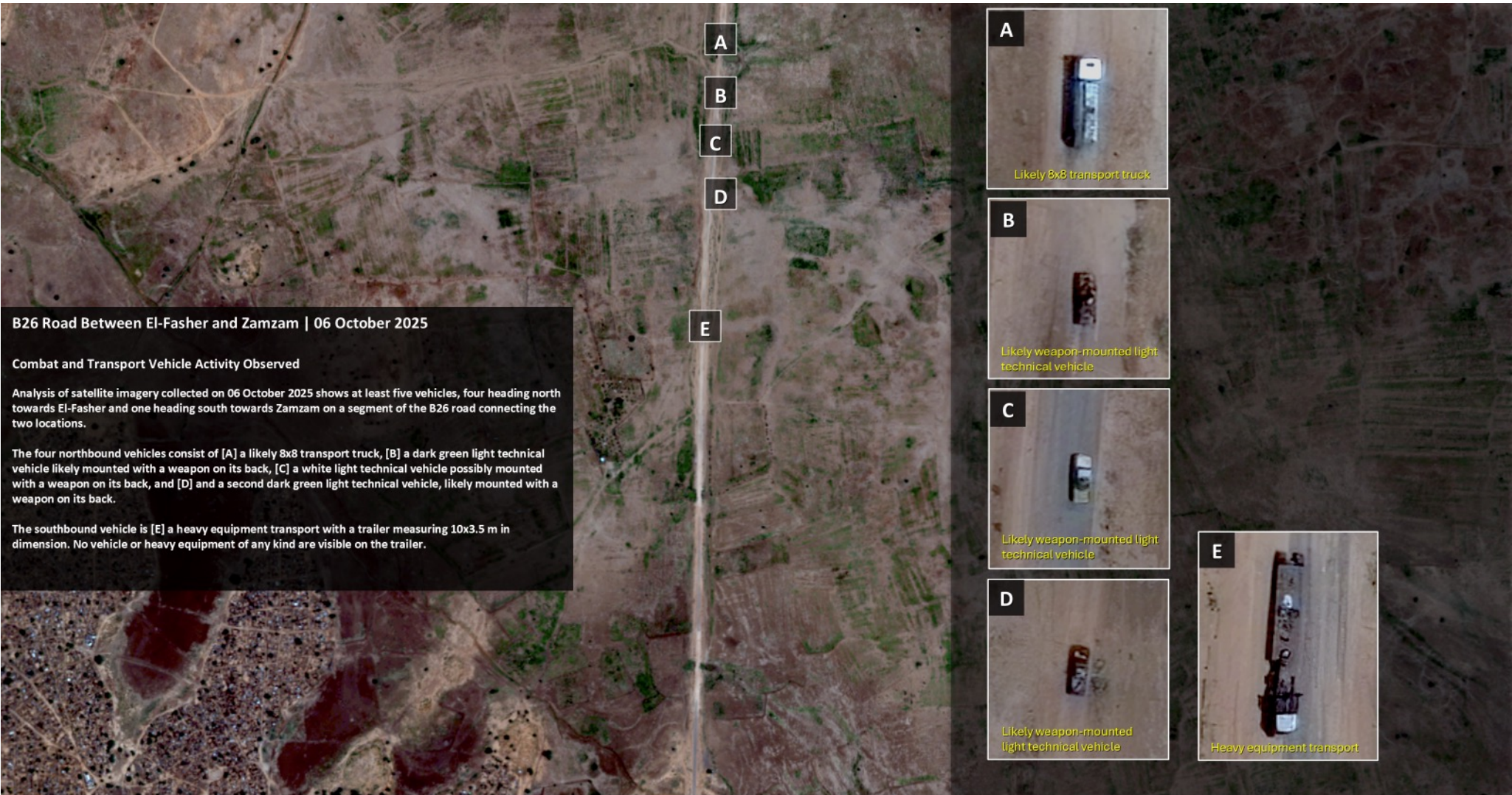
This new construction is a likely control measure for traffic on both the north and south sides of the Melit Gate at the northern access point of El-Fasher.



26 September 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies  
Image enhanced with MGP Pro + HD image enhancement



08 October 2025 © 2025 Planet Labs PBC



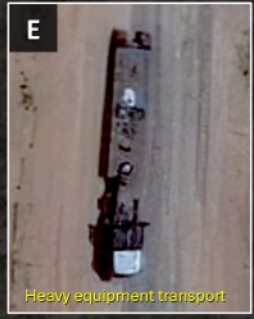
A

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