SPECIAL REPORT

El-Fasher Falling, RSF Controls Abu Shouk IDP Camp

18 September 2025

Yale SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Humanitarian Research Lab

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I. Key Findings

The Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) assesses that El-Fasher is falling to Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and that RSF likely controls Abu Shouk Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp. Yale HRL makes this assessment based on the following indicators:

1. HRL identifies a bulk of force being applied in a directional maneuver including close quarter battle overtaking Joint Forces' headquarters at the former UNAMID compound;
2. RSF is utilizing advanced weaponry and techniques at and near SAF and Joint Forces' installations;
3. HRL does not assess that SAF and Joint Forces have sufficient forces and supplies; and
4. RSF maintains tactical advantage and siege conditions in the event of a prolonged battle; their berms almost entirely encircle El-Fasher, while RSF maintains continued supply and logistics superiority and continues to successfully deny supply lines to SAF as well as the civilians of El-Fasher.

Yale HRL's assessment that El-Fasher is "falling" does not have a specific end date. This assessment finds that it is highly unlikely that another outcome is possible without SAF receiving immediate reinforcements. The results of RSF's capture and control of Abu Shouk IDP Camp and encirclement of El-Fasher have already proven catastrophic for civilians.

Mass RSF attack on Former UNAMID Compound, Joint Forces' Headquarters, and Abu Shouk IDP Camp

HRL assesses that RSF is conducting a largescale attack consisting of more than 80 vehicles, including one armored vehicle, from the north through Abu Shouk IDP Camp using analysis of satellite imagery collected on 18 September 2025. RSF has likely captured the former UNAMID compound, Joint Forces' base of operations. A building is visibly damaged in satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025, and buildings near Abu Shouk have been razed to the ground between 15 and 17 September 2025, according to analysis of low-resolution satellite imagery. There are at least 82 vehicles north of that area in Abu Shouk IDP camp visible in satellite imagery collected on 18 September 2025. The 82 vehicles are north of an area that is saturated with over 250 munition impacts, some with blast spray and impact cratering indicating that they were fired from south of the location. Yale HRL also identifies an armored vehicle consistent with a heavy armored fighting vehicle in northern Abu Shouk.

Local media and a range of open sources corroborated that RSF was launching this largescale attack on northwest El-Fasher.[1] Photos and videos released primarily by pro-RSF propaganda accounts since 8:48:37 and 8:49:16 UTC, when the satellite imagery was collected, indicate that RSF has captured the former UNAMID compound, Joint Forces' base of operations.[2] Surviving SAF and Joint Forces were allegedly forced to retreat toward the airfield and the area around El-Fasher University.[3]

Yale HRL concludes that RSF likely holds Joint Forces' base of operations, the former UNAMID compound, and can move without resistance through Abu Shouk IDP Camp. There are multiple instances of structures which have been razed in Abu Shouk visible in satellite imagery between 15 and 18 September 2025.

RSF Presence in Souk

Beyond the largescale attack in the northwest, RSF has made gains crossing the Souk area in El-Fasher. Yale HRL identifies multiple munition impacts in satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025 northeast of the El-Fasher water treatment plant on the western side of the Wadi. This indicates that SAF's easternmost boundary has shrunk significantly.

The airfield and areas nearby, the *de facto* SAF base of operations, have been heavily saturated with munition impacts visible in satellite imagery from 15 September 2025.

SAF/JF Defensive Capability

HRL no longer identifies a significant vehicle presence consistent with SAF and Joint Forces. While open sources claimed on 16 September that SAF and Joint Forces had repelled a major attack and captured vehicles, HRL has not identified either a significant vehicle reserve at the SAF 6th Division or any other location in El-Fasher capable of defending against any major attacks.[4] Additionally, Joint Forces' commander Burah was confirmed killed around 15 September 2025, a critical loss for Joint Forces' leadership.

Advanced UAVs

HRL identifies two advanced long-range fixed-wing UAVs visible in flight using satellite imagery: one CH-95/FH-95-consistent UAV (likely RSF) is visible in satellite imagery from 18 September 2025 and one likely TB2-consistent UAV (likely SAF) is visible in satellite imagery from 15 September 2025.

The CH-95 / FH-95-consistent UAV matches the type seen on the ground at RSF-controlled Nyala airport first in January 2025. This CH-95 / FH-95-consistent UAV is visible in flight in satellite imagery over El-Fasher airport, the *de facto* base of operations for SAF 6th Division. The UAV has a blue ghosting effect indicating that the object is in motion. There have been regular reports of both surveillance and "kamikaze" or so-called "suicide" drones used in and over El-Fasher by both sides. RSF's utilization of this UAV over SAF's base of operations indicates that RSF does not assess that SAF has the capability to shoot down this UAV. It further suggests that RSF maintains air space dominance and, given this UAV's electronic warfare surveillance capabilities, RSF may be using it to coordinate close quarter operations and maneuver.

The UAV likely consistent with a TB2 visible in satellite imagery on 15 September 2025 over the El-Fasher airport is a likely SAF-controlled UAV.

II. Human Security Analysis

RSF is highly likely to conduct a range of systematic mass atrocities in El-Fasher and Abu Shouk IDP Camp during and after capturing El-Fasher.[5] With *de facto* control of Abu Shouk IDP Camp, RSF functionally controls every displaced persons camp in Darfur outside those controlled by Abdulwahid Al-Nour's forces in Tawilah. There are already regular reports of RSF abducting women and girls from homes in Abu Shouk and El-Fasher. Civilians fleeing El-Fasher for safe havens in Tawilah and other areas regularly "disappear;"[6] and RSF is known to conduct extrajudicial disappearances and murders of men and boys and abduct and torture women and girls.[7] This battle is occurring simultaneously as RSF in North Kordofan allegedly conducts mass atrocities against prisoners of war in Kazgeil and Rahad Al-Nuba, including torture, executions, and desecration of remains.

If the international community plans to at last take meaningful action on El-Fasher now is the time, understanding that it may even be too late.

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. 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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[1] Darfur24 " "احتدام المعارك" .. "الدعم السريع" "المشتركة" "تتوغل في مقر "بمدينة الفاشر" *Darfur24* 18 September 2025 https://www.darfur24.com/2025/09/18/%d8%a7%d8%ad%d8%aa%d8%af%d8%a7%d9%85-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d8%b9%d8%a7%d8%b1%d9%83-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%af%d8%b9%d9%85-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b3%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%b9-%d8%aa%d8%aa%d9%88%d8%ba%d9%84-%d9%81/, archived at https://perma.cc/6SHL-Z7LZ

[2] HRL_MMC_120; HRL_MMC_121; HRL_MMC_122; HRL_MMC_123, HRL_MMC_124, HRL_MMC_125 have been redacted for protection purposes.

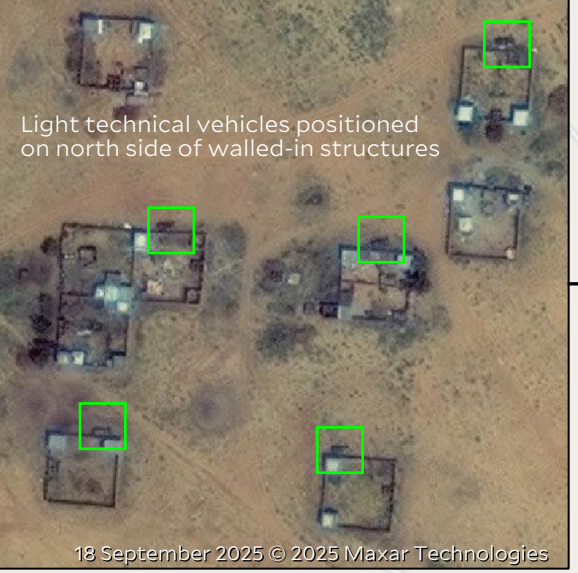
[3] Sudan Tribune "«تصعيد عسكري كبير في الفاشر والمعارك تصل مقر قيادة «المشتركة"" *Sudan Tribune,* 18 September 2025. Available at https://sudantribune.net/article305154/, archived at https://perma.cc/9HWV-5GJ9

[4] عبدالرؤوف طه علي (@AbwTh89838) " الجيش والمشتركة يصدان الموجة الاولى من الهجوم على الفاشر ويسيطران على عدد العربات القتالية هذا" X (formerly Twitter) 15 September 2025 https://x.com/AbwTh89838/status/1967834781128986628, https://perma.cc/7KYX-F4U4

[5] *Sudan Tribune* "«الدعم السريع» تغتال أكثر من 40 مدنيا" *Sudan Tribune,* 16 September 2025. Available at https://sudantribune.net/article305078/, archived at https://perma.cc/Q7Z9-CSN2.

[6] *Darfur24* " مقتل مواطن تحت التعذيب على طريق الفاشر الطويلة" *Darfur24,* 14 September 2025. Available at https://www.darfur24.com/2025/09/14/%d9%85%d9%82%d8%aa%d9%84-%d9%85%d9%88%d8%a7%d8%b7%d9%86-%d8%aa%d8%ad%d8%aa-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%aa%d8%b9%d8%b0%d9%8a%d8%a8-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d8%b7%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%82-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%81%d8%a7%d8%b4%d8%b1-%d9%80/, archived at https://perma.cc/SF9R-WPVF.

[7] HRL_MMC_118; HRL_MMC_119 have been redacted for protection purposes.



Abu ShoukIDP Camp

Abu Shouk

Nifasha IDP Camp

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Northwest El-Fasher and Abu Shouk IDP Camp | 18 September 2025

Green Squares represent vehicles
Red dots represent munition impacts

Analysis of 2025.

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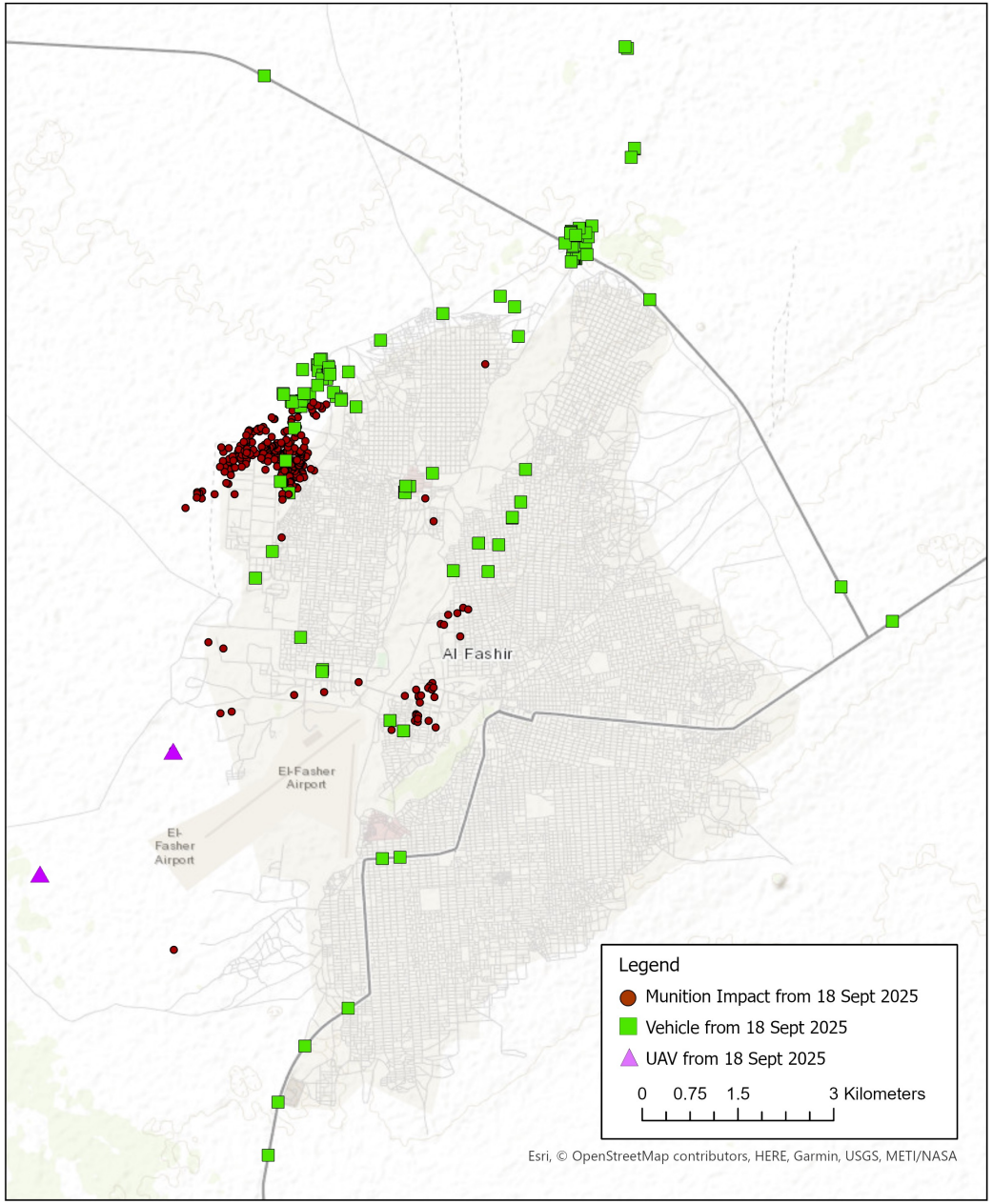
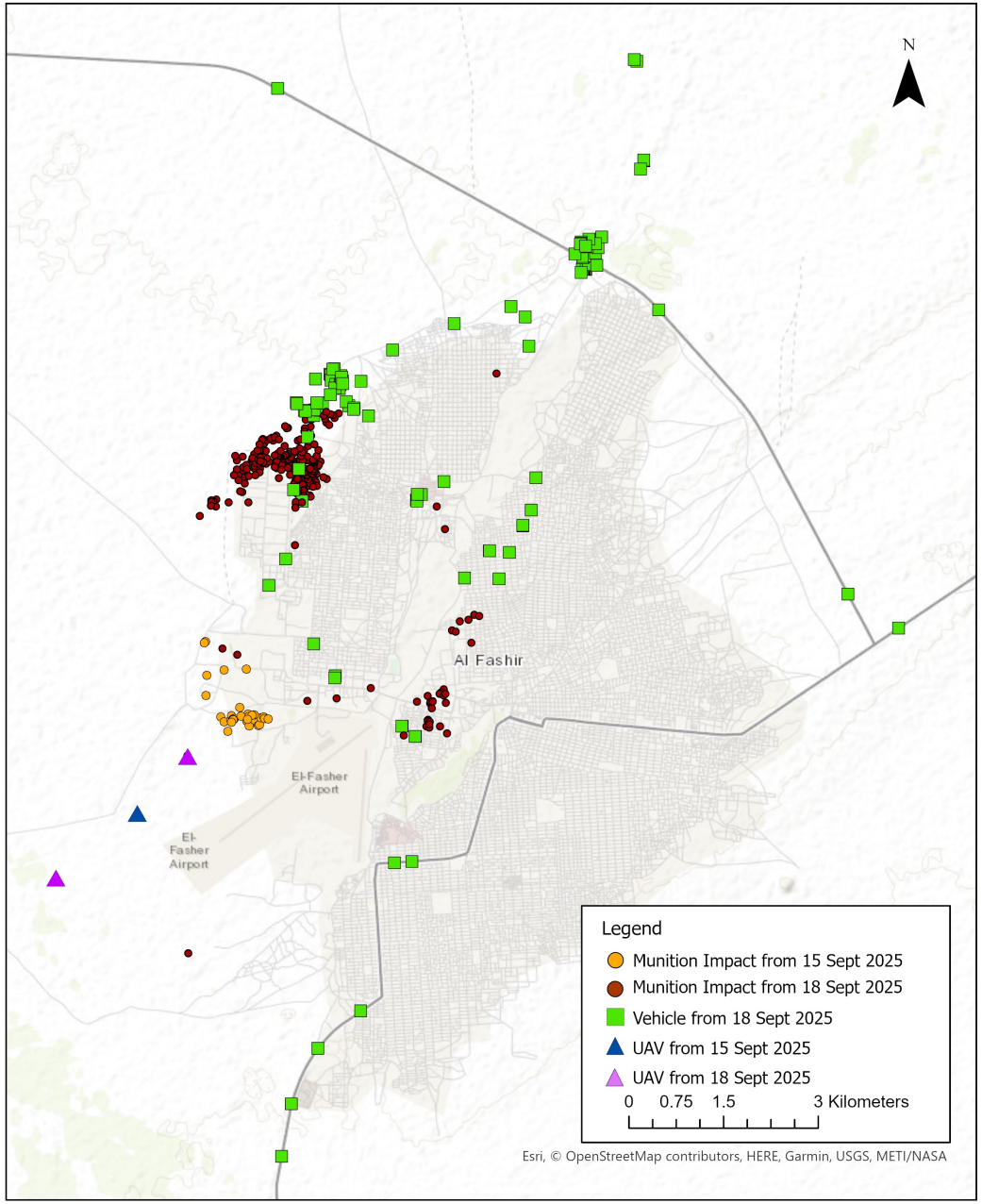
Munition Impacts, Vehicle Presence, and UAV Activity in El-Fasher, Sudan from 18 Sept 2025



Munition Impacts, Vehicle Presence, and UAV Activity in El-Fasher, Sudan from 15 and 18 Sept 2025



Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE AND MUNITION IMPACTS OBSERVED BETWEEN 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows thermal scarring and damage to several structures, in addition to the new presence of several munition impacts, in the Abu Shouk IDP Camp.

This destruction has been verified by VIIRs thermal detection on 15 September 2025 at 11:49 UTC. The baseline imagery from 15 September 2025 was collected at 8:48 UTC, approximately 3 hours before the thermal detection registered.

Additionally, low resolution Sentinel-2 imagery collected on 17 September 2025 also verifies this destruction.

15 September 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

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Former UNAMID Compound, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE AND MUNITION IMPACTS OBSERVED BETWEEN 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows destruction to a building within the former UNAMID compound.

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

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

El-Fasher

SMOKE PLUME OBSERVED BETWEEN 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows a smoke plume from a likely munition impact in the western area of El-Fasher.

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Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE AND MUNITION IMPACTS OBSERVED BETWEEN 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows thermal scarring and damage to military troop tents positioned on a western access point of the city.

Also visible are at least three munition impacts consistent with that from artillery.

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Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

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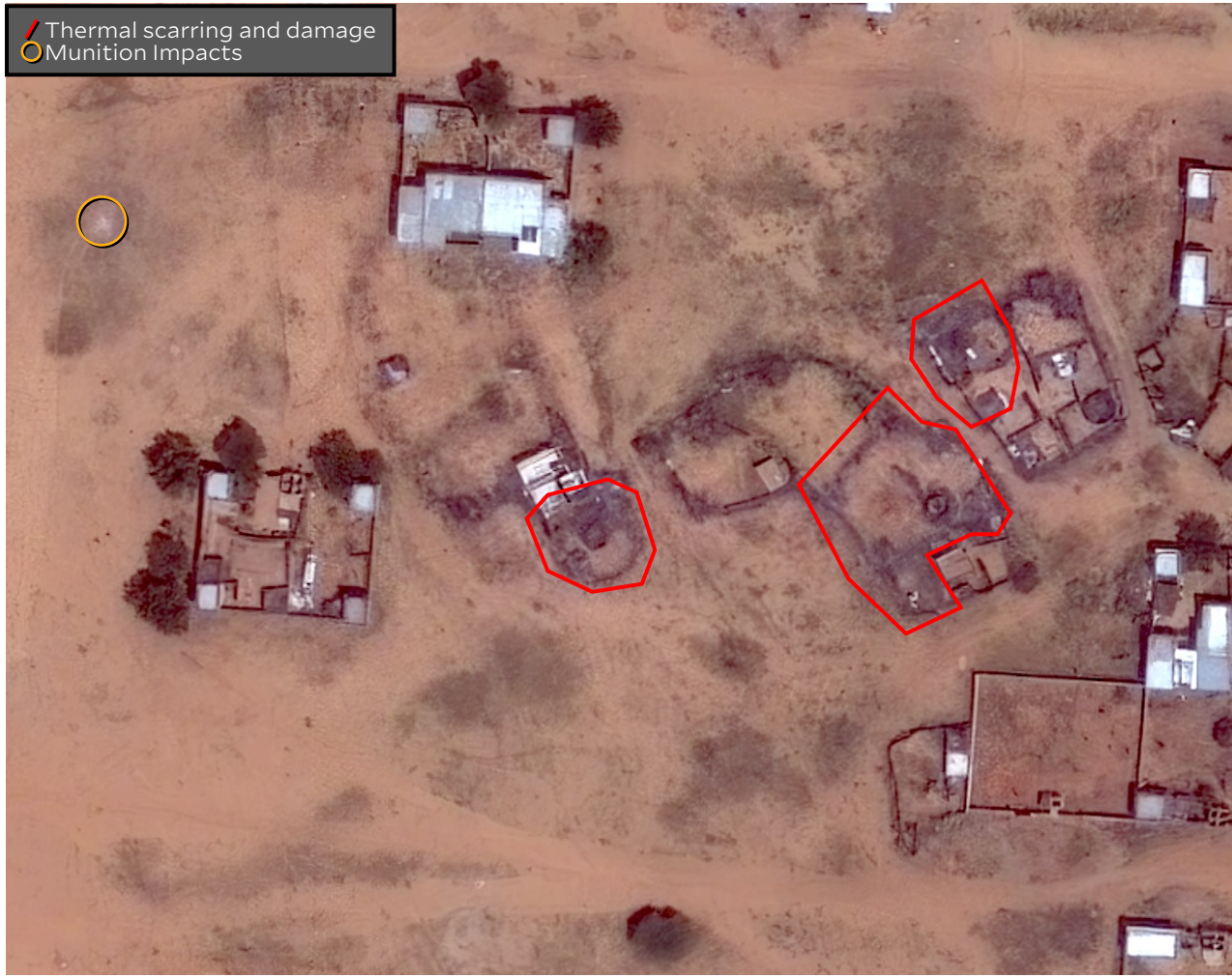

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Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

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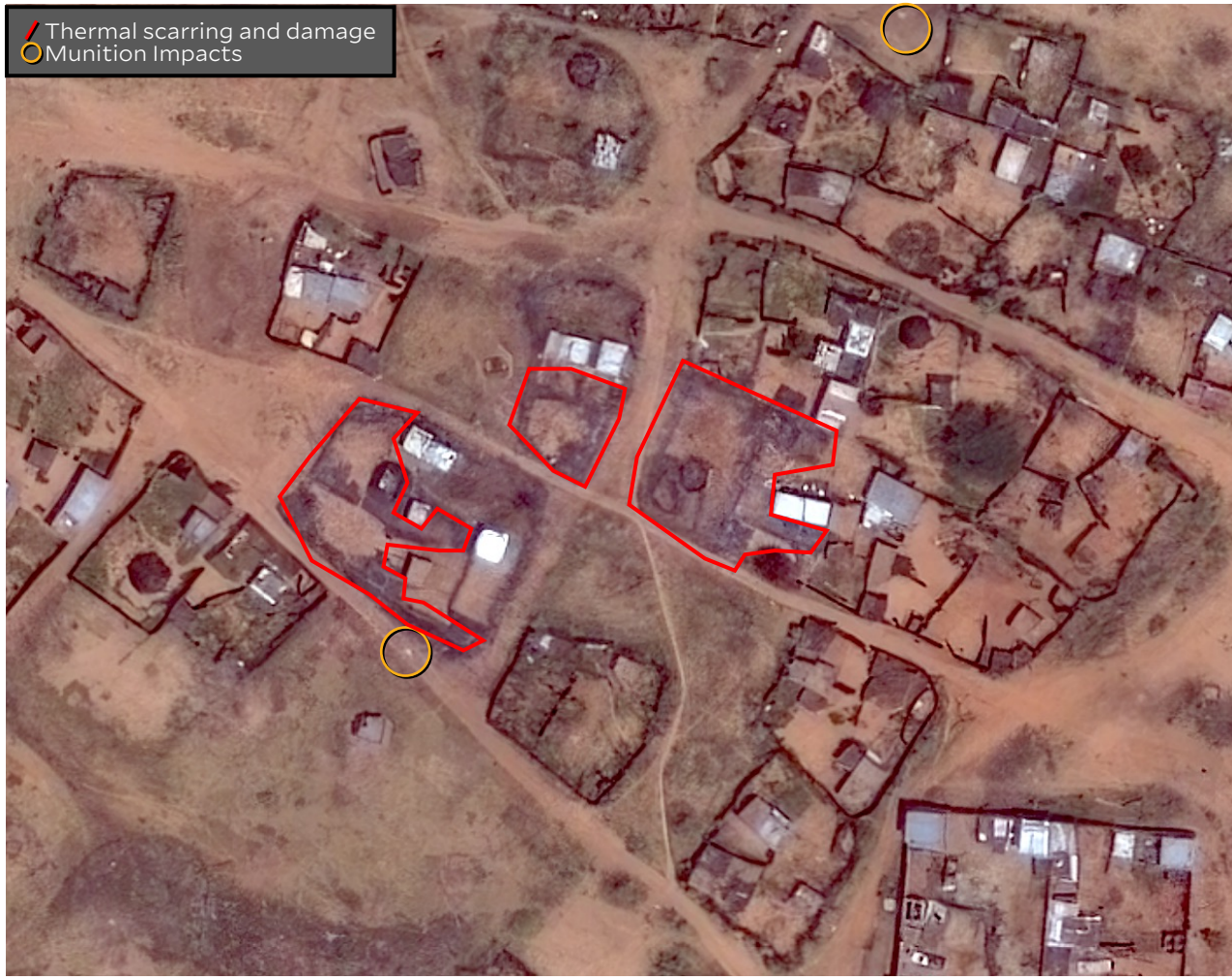

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Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage due to likely munition impacts to several structures in the Abu Shouk IDP Camp.

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Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2025

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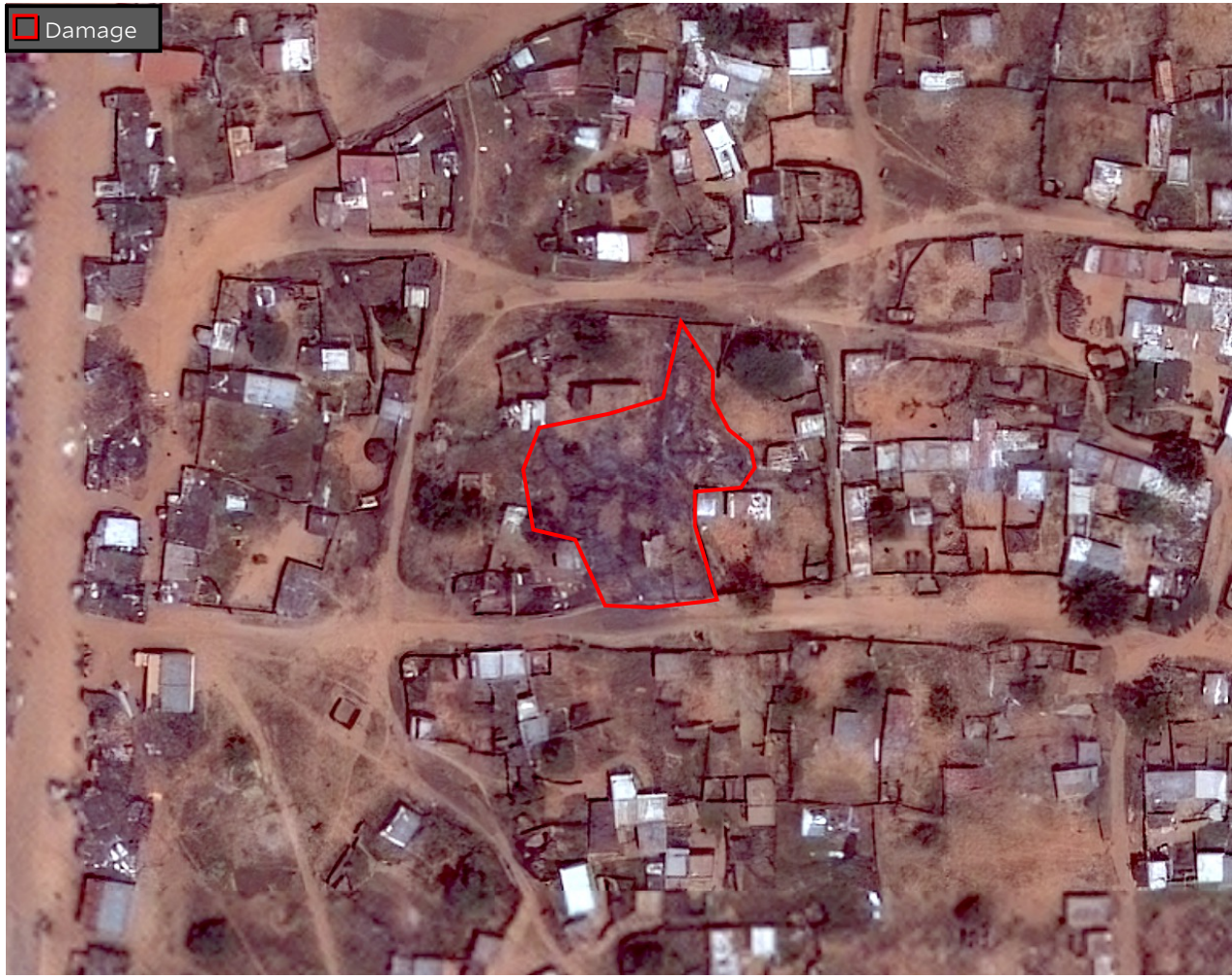

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Girls Driving School , El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 15 and 18 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage due to a building at the Girls Driving School.

The new presence of a light technical vehicle is observed 15 m outside the northeast of the driving school compound.

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Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

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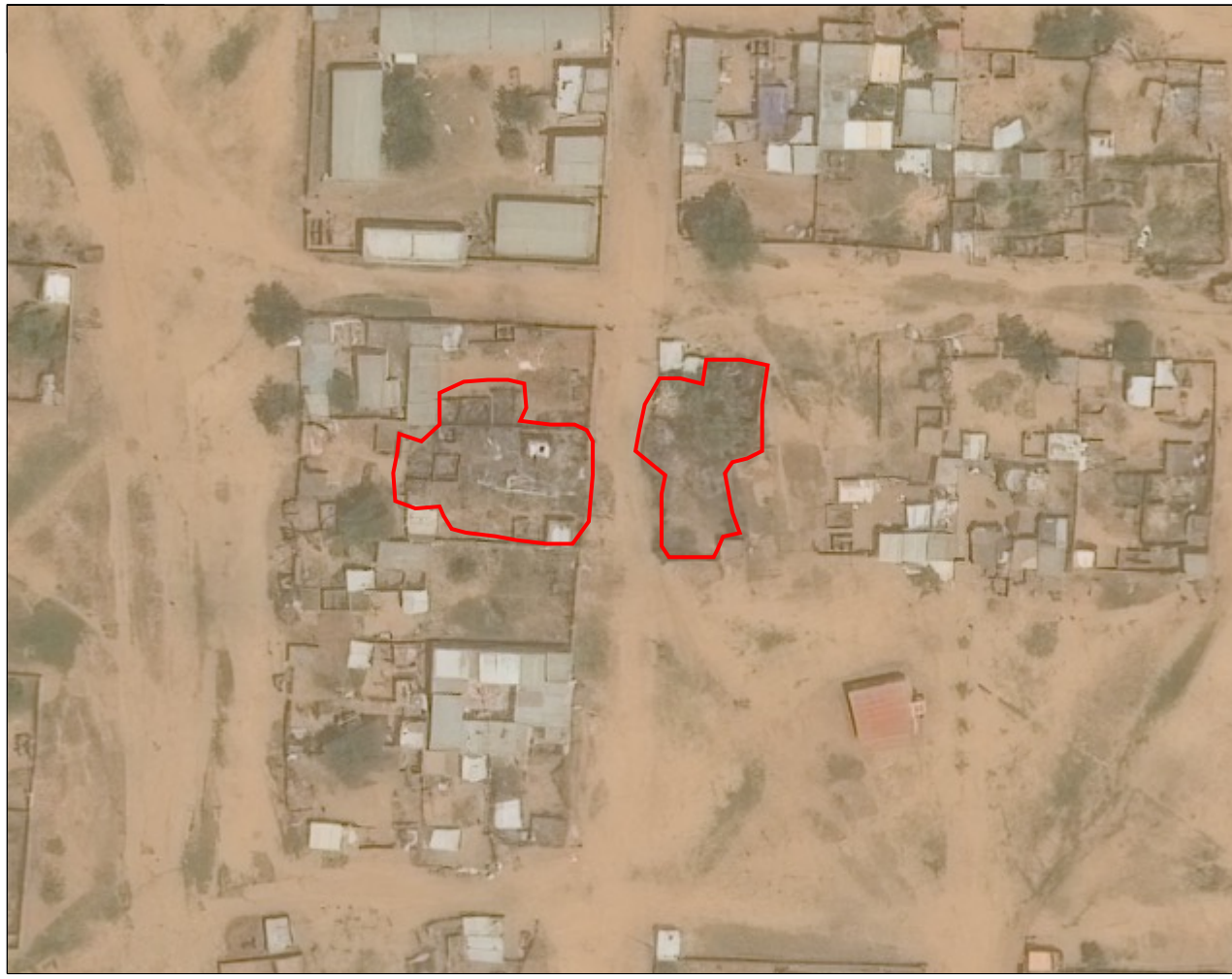

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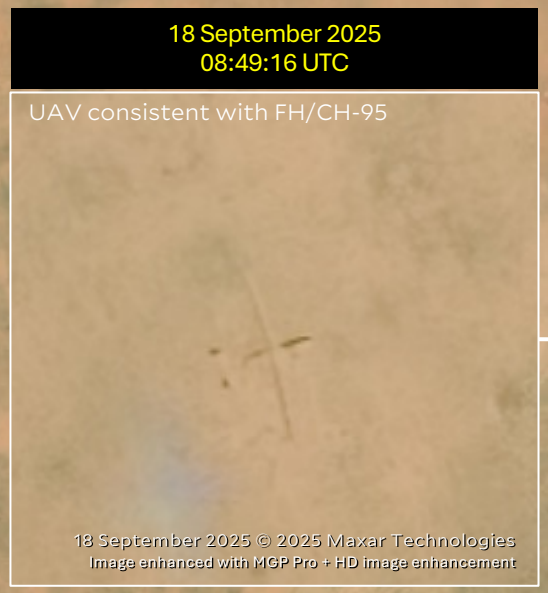
SW El-Fasher | 15 - 18 September 2025

UAVs spotted in three satellite imagery collected on 15 and 18 September 2025.

The UAVs captured in imagery on 18 September 2025 are likely the same UAV in motion in two sequential satellite images.

- Observed UAV



EL-Fasher Airport

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