Human Security Alert:
Evidence of Civilian Fatalities and
RSF Control of Exit Points from El Fasher

6 August 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) concludes that the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has surrounded El-Fasher and there is no route out of the city that RSF does not control. Civilians attempting to exit El-Fasher must now pass through a single 50-meter wide RSF control point where people have reportedly been robbed, forced to pay bribes, and killed. Yale HRL has collected evidence that a significant number of fatalities have occurred since May 2025, including an unknown number of civilians. Yale HRL can confirm that two markets, three schools, and two mosques have been bombarded since June 2025. While the number of civilians remaining in El-Fasher is unknown, pattern of life activity consistent with civilians has been observed by Yale HRL in north-west El-Fasher and Abu Shouk IDP camp and there are credible reports that at least three enclaves of civilians exist in the city.

Significant Increase in Mortality in El-Fasher

Yale HRL identifies evidence of significant fatalities based on burial activity at civilian cemeteries in El-Fasher between 9 May 2025 and 5 August 2025. At least 378 new individuated mounds, which are visually consistent with the burial of individual human remains, are in cemeteries in civilian areas during this period. This increase in burial activity is at three cemeteries: two located in Abu Shouk IDP Camp and one located near the Souk (Grand Market) in El-Fasher. Yale HRL has observed activity consistent with civilian pattern of life in northwest El-Fasher and Abu Shouk IDP camp during this period. Satellite imagery from 3 August 2025 shows objects consistent with animal-drawn carts running down a main road in Abu Shouk IDP Camp (NB: satellite imagery is being withheld for human security purposes). Open source and ground reports claim that civilians are present in at least three other parts of the city and have been unable to flee.

Similar increases in burial activity are seen at areas utilized by Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), Joint Forces, and RSF. At least 349 new individuated mounds are present in these cemeteries between 9 May and 5 August 2025. Two of the armed actor cemeteries which have increased by 225 individuated mounds are at SAF and Joint Forces' installations. One site with 80 new individuated mounds is on the eastern edge of El-Fasher off the B-26 road, an area which RSF has controlled for over a year. There are at least 44 individuated mounds at a cemetery near the Shala Prison in a contested area south of the Airfield.

Along with repeated shelling, open sources have reported widespread food shortages which have led to the closure of community kitchens and emergency response rooms (ERRs) across El-Fasher. While El-Fasher has been under some degree of siege conditions for well over a year, in the past four months RSF has allegedly blockaded the city. Civilians have resorted to eating *ambaz*, an animal feed supplement made of fermented seed oils; as of this report, the animal feed is running out.[1]

RSF Controls Civilian Exit from El-Fasher

Every major road out of El-Fasher has an RSF checkpoint preventing freedom of movement. To the north of the city is an earthen wall, referred to as a berm, stretching approximately 6 kilometers with a single 50-meter opening. RSF has checkpoints at the B-26 road on the east of the city; to the south near Zamzam IDP Camp, and two checkpoints on the El-Fasher-to-Kutum road, where the berm is located. The western area of El-Fasher appears to be controlled by RSF, indicated by an arson attack on Sharaga Musa off the A-5 road to Tawilah between 28 July – 3 August 2025.

On Friday, 3 August, Tasis (an RSF-declared administrative authority) and RSF-aligned forces reportedly launched a so-called "evacuation" campaign to encourage the passage of civilians out of El-Fasher through Garni.[2] Yale HRL assesses that RSF appears to be using this point as a location for controlling civilian access out of the city, with alleged reports of bribes, theft, and, in some cases, extrajudicial killing.[3] On 31 July, multiple reports claimed that 15 men using these control points were allegedly murdered by RSF, under the auspices of searching for soldiers.[4]

Bombardment of Shelters, Special Protected Objects

Two markets, three schools, and two mosques have been bombarded across El-Fasher since the end of June 2025. Some of the schools have served as a bomb shelters and centers for displaced persons and at least one of the mosques have served as a community kitchen. Further details on the presence or lack of civilians and humanitarian facilities at locations are not being shared publicly due to ongoing human security concerns. The Mawashi (livestock) market is not believed to have been operational when it was attacked and has been heavily contested. Some of these places may have served as staging areas. These locations have been bombarded by both SAF and Joint Forces and RSF. The Navaisha market in Abu Shouk IDP Camp and the University of Health Sciences facilities were likely targeted by RSF.

Schools and mosques are often used as shelters for displaced persons, emergency response rooms and community kitchens, and for other forms of community-based aid. Schools and mosques places have special protected status under international humanitarian law, regardless of whether humanitarian aid is being distributed. Sites used to distribute humanitarian aid have protected status under international law as well.

II.   Human Security Analysis

Yale HRL assesses that the humanitarian situation in El-Fasher has deteriorated to its most dire point since RSF's siege began in the spring of 2024. El-Fasher and the surrounding IDP camps have been in a state of severe food insecurity for well over a year, with some areas formally declared as reaching IPC-5 (Famine) by the Famine Review Committee. Despite this longstanding food emergency, ground reports received by Yale HRL indicate that the food security situation has deteriorated even further, to the point that "famine foods" are all that remain for many civilians as their only source of nutrition. These last meager sources of caloric intake are running out.[5] Civilians are unable to flee without facing an RSF control point that could result in being forced to pay a bribe, theft of belongings (including food), and threat of harm including assault, rape (CRSV), and murder. Civilian mortality, based on the analysis of cemeteries, is continuing at an alarming rate. Lastly, the facilities that civilians are using are being bombarded by both parties to the conflict on a regular basis. Regardless of whether or when SAF and JF forces are defeated by RSF, civilians can no longer survive inside El-Fasher under these conditions.

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.

Yale HRL assesses that an increase in individuated mounds in cemeteries (both old and newly created) are indicators of mortality. Analysis of individuated mounds consistent with burial mounds was conducted using multitemporal change detection of satellite imagery by assessing the earth disturbances consistent with pre-existing burial mounds. These earth disturbances are similar in dimension (typically approximately 2 meters long) and orientation to pre-existing burial mounds which were present at cemeteries across El-Fasher before the battle for El-Fasher began over a year ago. (In some instances, the areas identified as cemeteries were created since the start of the conflict – often in military areas. These are identified as cemeteries due to the size, orientation, and organized pattern of burial mounds, all of which are consistent with burial mounds at known cemeteries across the city.) There are instances where Yale HRL has assessed burial activity, including excavations in progress, gatherings of

people around excavated or recent burial mounds, and light-colored long objects consistent with that of a body in a shroud at the cemeteries. This assessment does not mean that Yale HRL finds that the individuated mounds necessarily hold the deceased, nor does it attribute number of persons per burial mound. Such an assessment is not possible to make using satellite imagery alone.

Yale HRL provides "civilian" and "military" attributions to cemeteries based on the installation of military objects and military presence near so-called "military" cemeteries versus the presence of civilian activity and previous civilian presence in their respective areas. These attributions do not mean that the activity within the cemeteries is military or civilian only.

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.
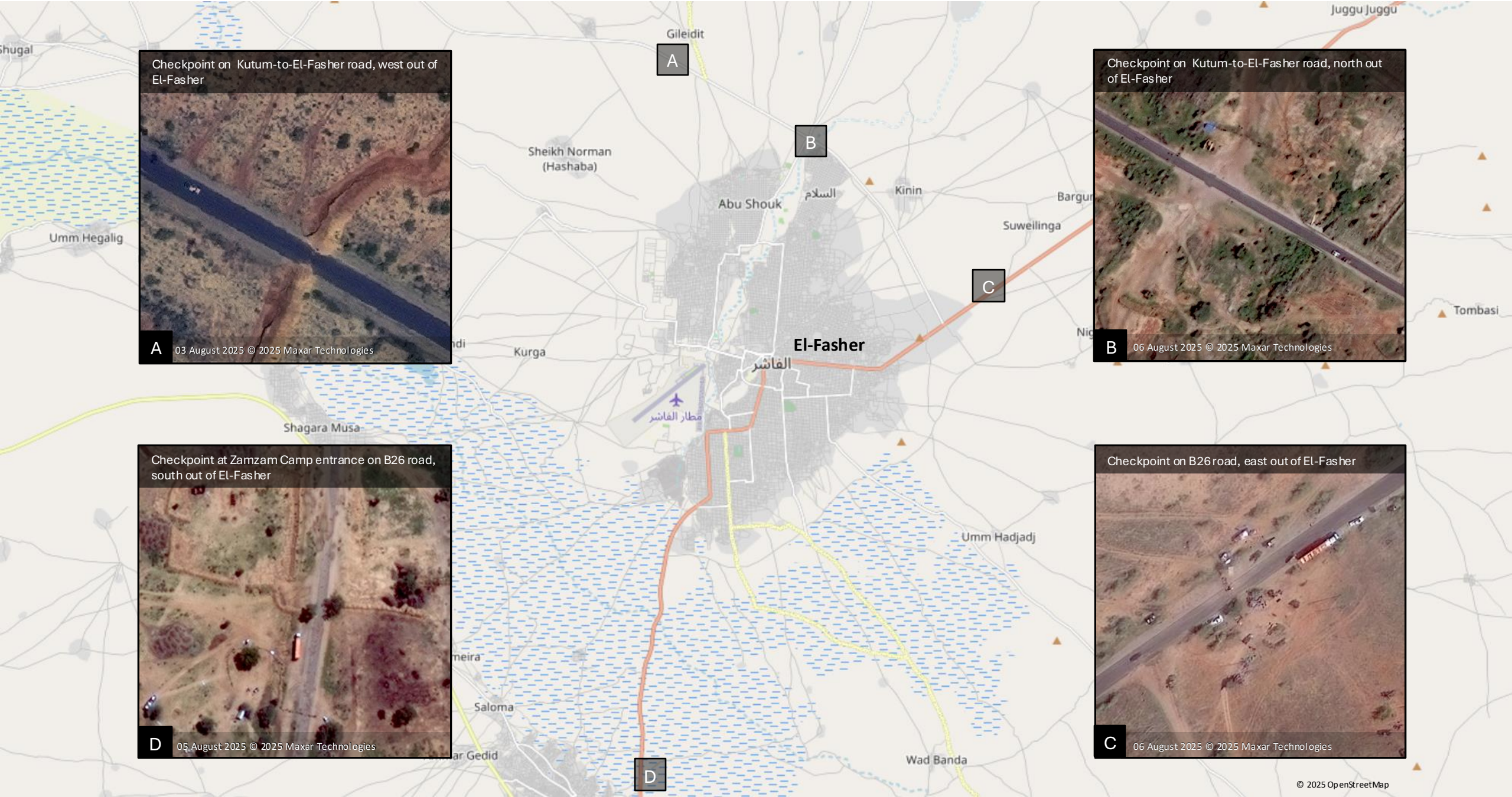
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[1] Sudanese Echo (@SudaneseEcho), "El Fasher Cries Out for Help as Starvation Tightens Under Siege: Resolution 2736 Ignored While the World Protects Its Interests With the UAE", July 29, 2025, https://x.com/sudaneseecho/status/1950068509997723987?s=46&t=TlkcKnABHidKCLifZ4oHNQ, archived at https://perma.cc/H49P-T8VP; Sudan Tribune, "Staple grains vanish in Sudan's besieged El Fasher, prices soar", July 30, 2025, https://sudantribune.com/article303407/, archived at https://perma.cc/7SS6-9NTY;

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3 Atar Network(@atarnetwork)," نازحو الفاشر: جوع داخل المدينة ونهب على الطريق"

الفاشر – أتر", July 30, 2025, https://x.com/atarnetwork/status/1950496162559000716/photo/1, archived at https://perma.cc/A8HG-3P6K

4 Sudan Tribune, "RSF kills at least 15 civilians fleeing El Fasher", August 2, 2025, https://sudantribune.com/article303508/, archived at https://perma.cc/VUN5-XTVM

5 : Sudan Tribune, "Staple grains vanish in Sudan's besieged El Fasher, prices soar", July 30, 2025, https://sudantribune.com/article303407/, archived at https://perma.cc/7SS6-9NTY;

اخبار السودان (@sudanakhbar), " والي شمال دارفور : أسعار الأمباز شهدت ارتفاعًا غير مسبوق في الفاشر وأصبحت على وشك النفاد", July 28, 2025, https://x.com/sudanakhbar/status/1949763280773452212, archived at perma.cc/PS7Y-ERSH.

Checkpoint on Kutum-to-El-Fasher road, west out of El-Fasher

A   03 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

Checkpoint on Kutum-to-El-Fasher road, north out of El-Fasher

B   06 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

Checkpoint at Zamzam Camp entrance on B26 road, south out of El-Fasher

D   05 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

Checkpoint on B26 road, east out of El-Fasher

C   06 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

El-Fasher
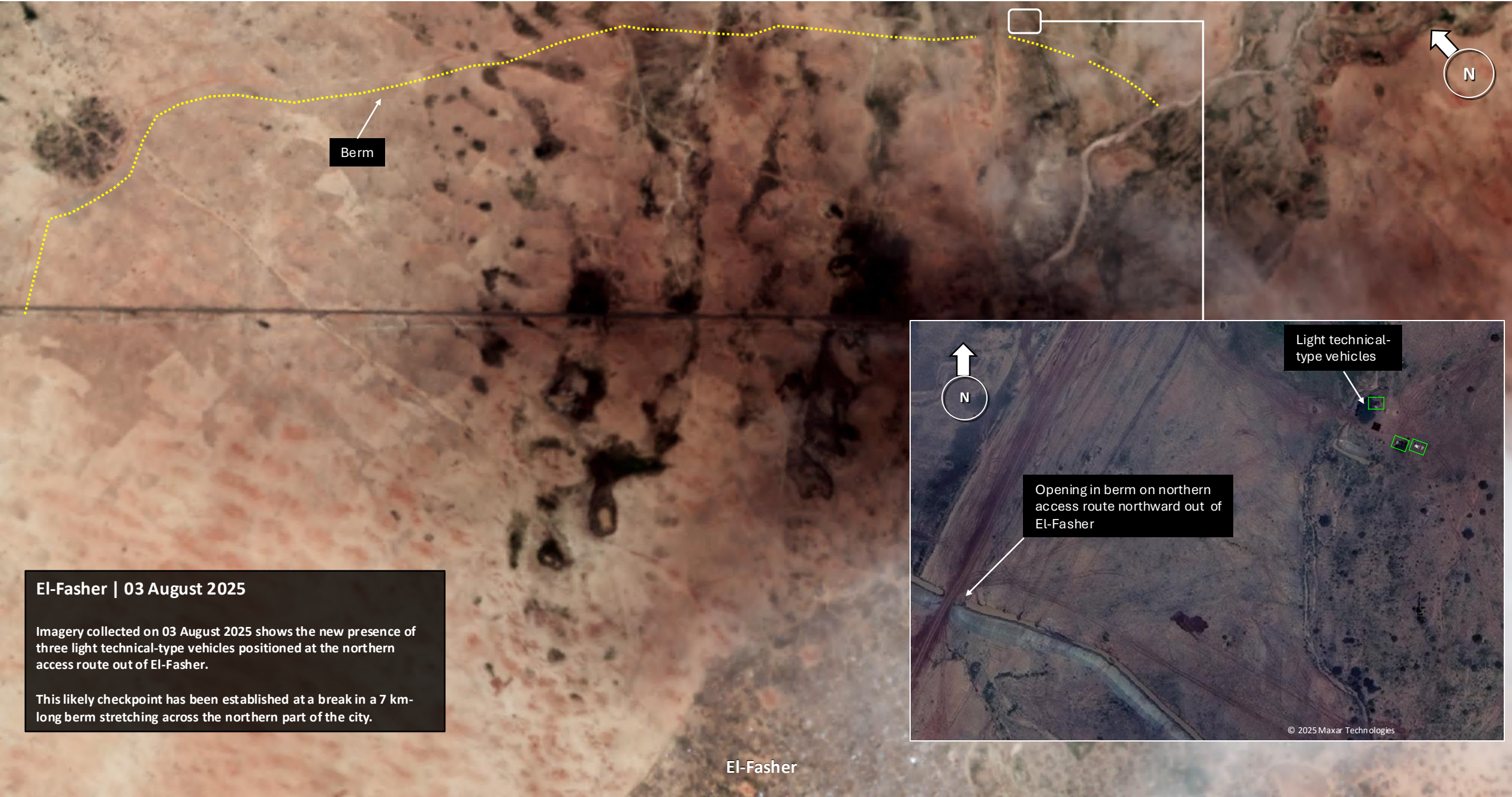الفاشر

Gileidit

Sheikh Norman (Hashaba)

Abu Shouk   السلام   Kinin

Bargur
Suweilinga

Tombasi

Umm Hegalig

Shugal

Kurga

Shagara Musa

Saloma

Umm Hadjadj

Wad Banda

Juggu Juggu

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Berm

Light technical-
type vehicles

Opening in berm on northern
access route northward out of
El-Fasher

El-Fasher | 03 August 2025

Imagery collected on 03 August 2025 shows the new presence of
three light technical-type vehicles positioned at the northern
access route out of El-Fasher.

This likely checkpoint has been established at a break in a 7 km-
long berm stretching across the northern part of the city.

El-Fasher

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El-Fasher

Berm Construction North of El-Fasher

··· **Berm**

☐ **Excavator**

Imagery collected on 06 June 2025 over an area 3 km north of El-Fasher shows that a berm observed initially being constructed between 12 and 15 May 2025 has continued to extend, through the use of two excavators, to nearly 5 km in length as of 06 July 2025.

A berm on the east has been observed extending from a wadi between 17-21 June 2025 and continues to extend with both berms likely to form a single berm.

Imagery analyzed from 09 July 2025 shows both berms have further extended towards each other with a gap of 185 meters remaining until they connect.

Excavator

Image enhanced with MGP Pro
HD image enhancement

Excavator

Image enhanced with MGP Pro
HD image enhancement

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Shagara Musa

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 28 JULY AND 03 AUGUST 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 28 July and 03 August 2025 shows the destruction of several structures due to a ground-based arson attack in the village of Shagara Musa.
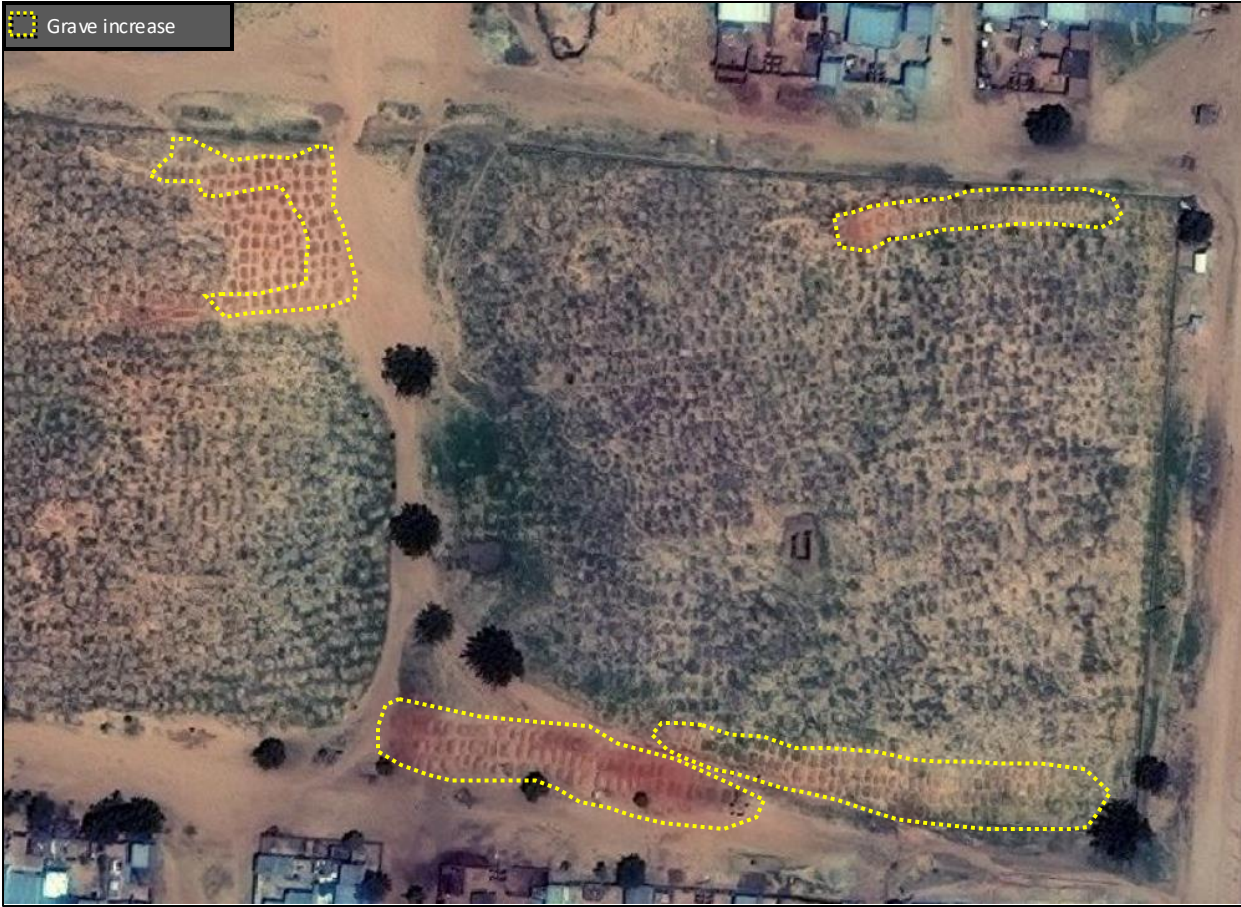

Thermal scarring and damage

28 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

03 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
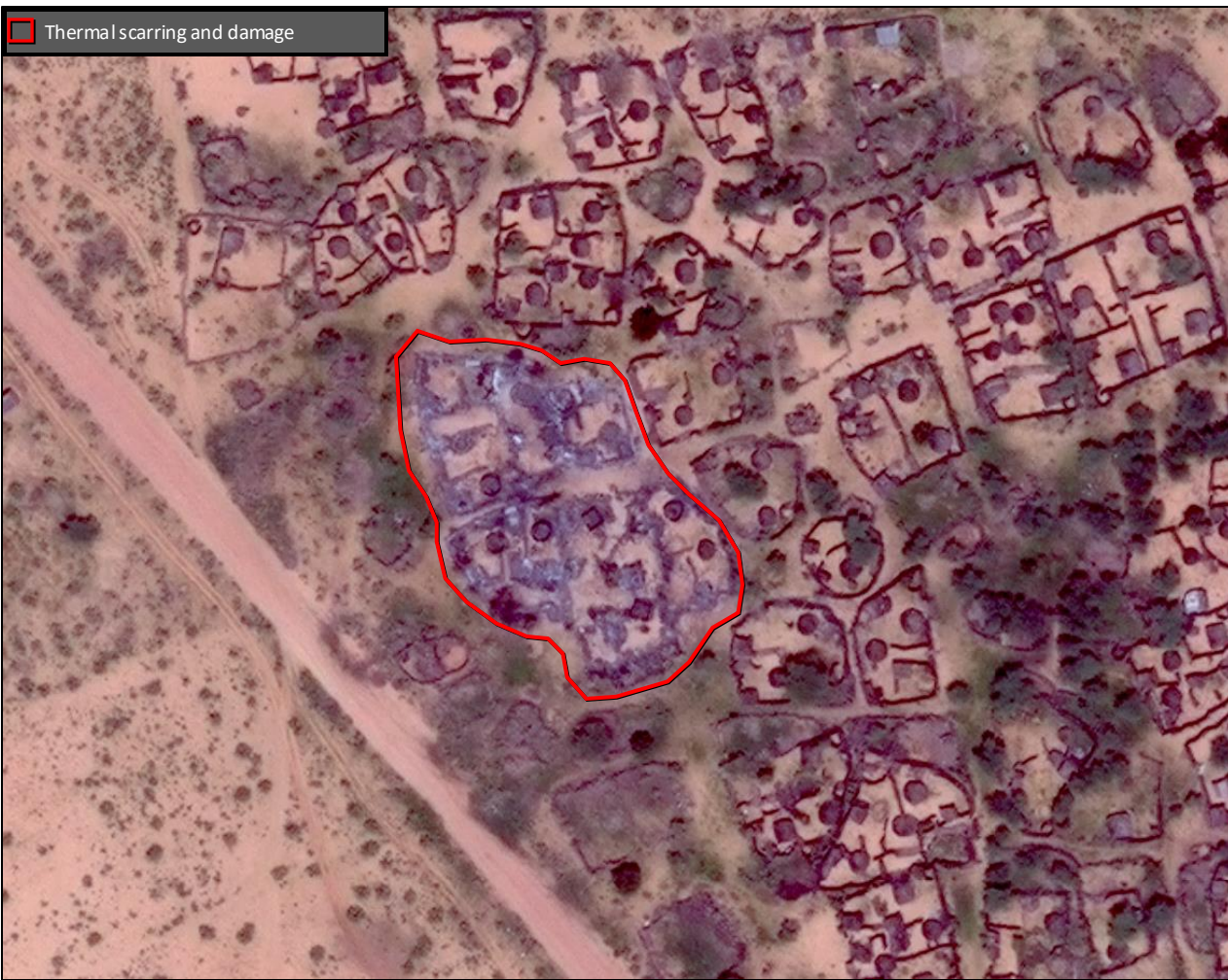
Al-Rahma Cemetery, Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

GRAVE ACTIVITY OBSERVED 09 MAY TO 03 AUGUST 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 09 May and 03 August 2025 over El-Fasher shows the increase of at least 214 individuated mounds consistent with burial mounds at the Al-Rahma Cemetery in Abu Shouk IDP camp.

09 May 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

03 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

Naivasha-Maqabir Cemetery, Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

GRAVE ACTIVITY OBSERVED 09 MAY TO 03 AUGUST 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 09 May and 03 August 2025 over El-Fasher shows the increase of at least 100 individuated mounds consistent with burial mounds at the Naivasha-Maqabir Cemetery. Imagery shown (1 of 2) represents a portion of the overall increase during the three-month period.

Grave increase

09 May 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

03 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

Naivasha-Maqabir Cemetery, Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

GRAVE ACTIVITY OBSERVED 09 MAY TO 03 AUGUST 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 09 May and 03 August 2025 over El-Fasher shows the increase of at least 100 individuated mounds consistent with burial mounds at the Naivasha-Maqabir Cemetery. Imagery shown (graphic 2 of 2) represents a portion of the overall increase.

Grave increase

09 May 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

03 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

Gravesite, Former UNAMID Compound, El-Fasher

DISTURBED EARTH OBSERVED BETWEEN 09 MAY AND 03 AUGUST 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 09 May and 03 August 2025 over the former UNAMID compound in El-Fasher shows the new presence of two areas of new individuated mounds at a burial site established against the wall of the compound.

Grave increase

09 May 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

03 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
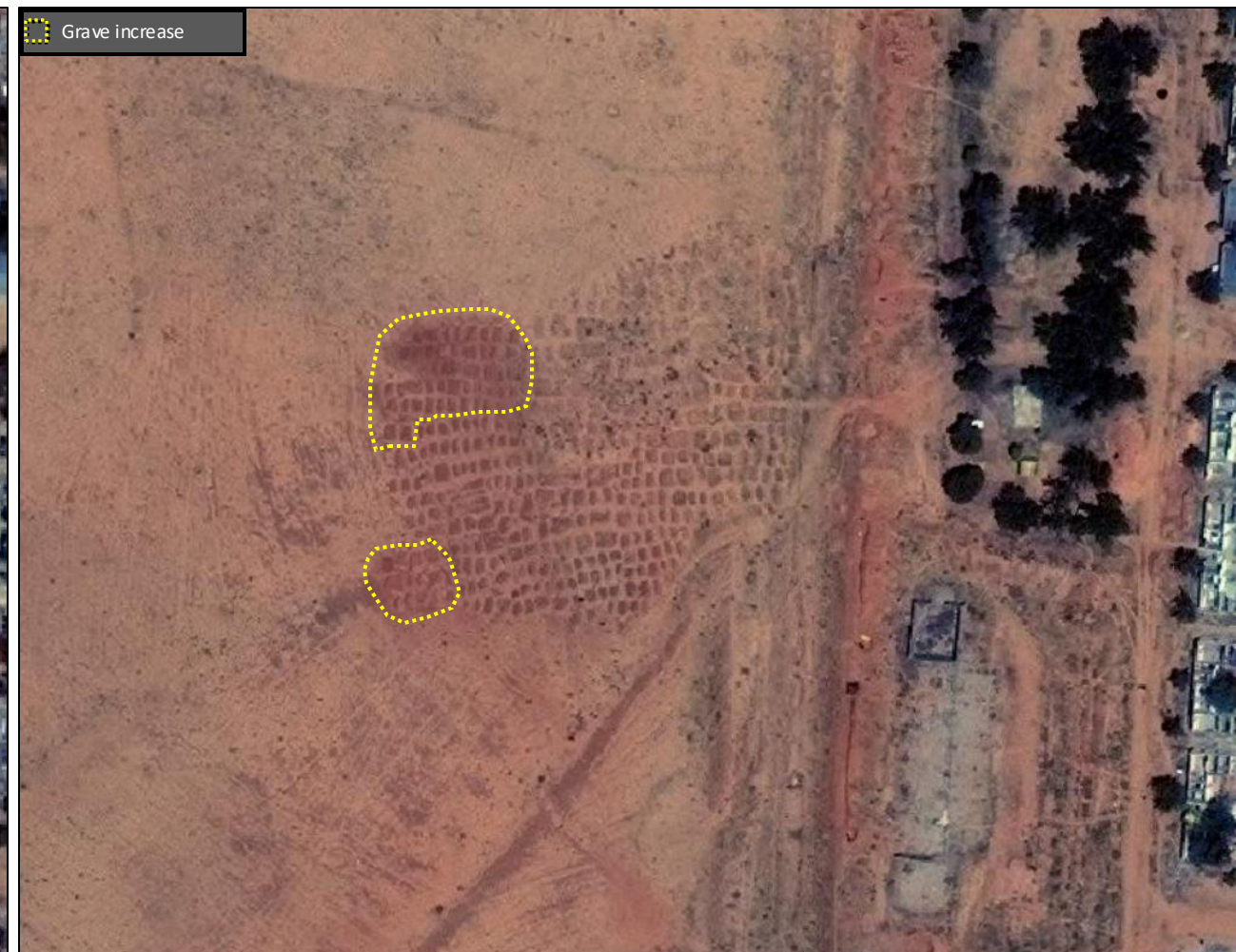
SAF 6th Division Base, El-Fasher

GRAVE ACTIVITY OBSERVED BETWEEN
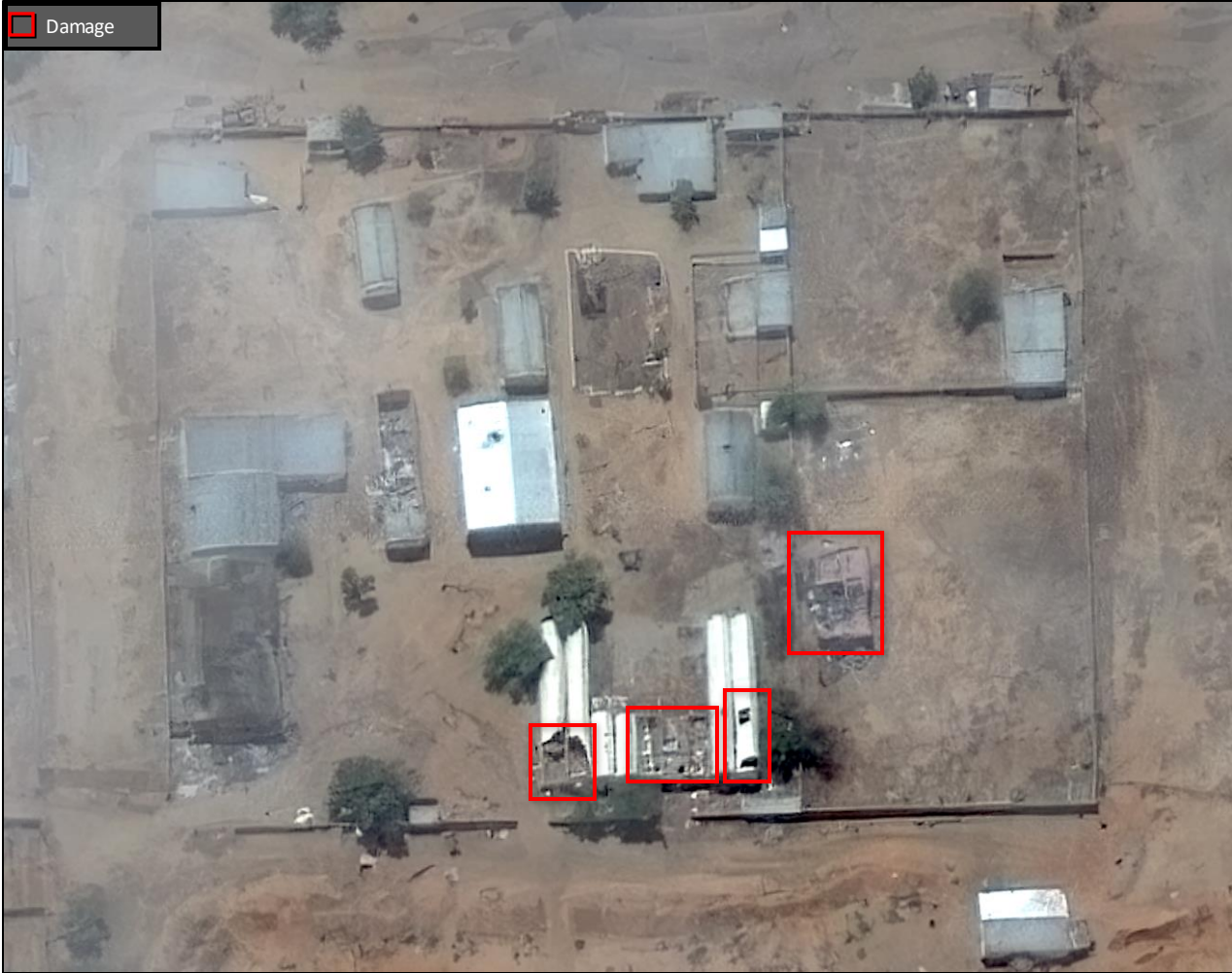## 22 JULY AND 03 AUGUST 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 09 May and 03 August 2025 over El-Fasher shows the increase of approximately 146 individuated mounds at a cemetery located within the SAF 6th Division base.

Grave increase

22 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

03 August 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

College of Health Sciences, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 28 JUNE AND 03 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 28 June and 03 July 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage from munition impacts to several structures of the College of Health Sciences.

28 June 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

03 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

Rabat Model School Benin, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 28 JUNE AND 03 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 28 June and 03 July 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage from munition impacts to several structures of the Rabat Model School Benin.

Damage

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Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

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Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

School, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 28 JUNE AND 03 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 28 June and 03 July 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage from a munition impact to a school in El-Fasher.

Damage

28 June 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

03 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

Abdul Rahim Mosque, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 28 JUNE AND 03 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 28 June and 03 July 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage from munition impacts to several structures of the Abdul Rahim Mosque.

28 June 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

03 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

Mosque, South-Central El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 28 JUNE AND 03 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 28 June and 03 July 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage from a munition impact to a mosque in south-central El-Fasher.

Damage

28 June 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

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Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

Navaisha Market, Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 14-22 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 14 and 22 July 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage from a likely munition impact to a building in the Navaisha Market located within the Abu Shouk IDP Camp.

Damage

14 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

22 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies
Image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

Mawashi Market, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 09 JULY AND 22 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 09 July and 22 July 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage from munition impacts to the Mawashi (livestock) market.

09 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

14 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

22 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies