RSF Alleged Massacre at Shag Alnom, Multidirectional Attacks on El-Obeid

18 July 2025

Yale SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Humanitarian Research Lab

This report was independently produced by the Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab with the support of the Avaaz Foundation. Learn more at https://medicine.yale.edu/lab/khoshnood/ and https://avaaz.org.

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Citation | Caitlin N. Howarth, Kaveh Khoshnood, Nathaniel A. Raymond et al. "RSF Razing of Shag Alnom, Multidirectional Attack on El-Obeid" 18 July 2025. Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health: New Haven.

I. Key Findings

The Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) corroborates reports of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) attack and alleged massacre in Shag Alnom, North Kordofan through very high resolution satellite imagery on 13 July 2025. This is a component of RSF's multidirectional attacks to encircle El-Obeid, North Kordofan. Yale HRL corroborates damage to military equipment and materiel in El Obeid, fighting in Umm Sumeima and RSF's ongoing control of Barra, North Kordofan.

Alleged RSF Massacre in Shag Alnom

On 12 July 2025 RSF attacked the village of Shag Alnoun, North Kordofan, approximately six kilometers northwest of Barah, North Kordofan and approximately 60 kilometers north of El Obeid.[1] Yale HRL identified a large smoke point over Shag Alnoun in low resolution satellite imagery from 13 July 2025. Buildings scattered across Shag Alnoun are razed and smoldering in very high resolution (VHR) satellite imagery from 14 July 2025 and there is a pattern of "tracking," consistent with the tracks made by vehicles, around buildings and throughout the community. The Sudan Doctor's Network reported on 13 July 2025 that an RSF attack on Shag Alnom killed at least 11 people including three children and pregnant women, although the number of people killed may be as high as 200 or even 300 people.[2] Sudan's Emergency Lawyers reported that civilians armed with "Kalashnikov rifles" tried to defend their community from "RSF troops using heavy weapons and combat drones". The Emergency Lawyers reported that "over 200 people were killed in the village of Shaq Alnom alone" stating that "most were burned to death in their homes or shot".[3]

RSF reportedly attacked and looted neighboring villages as well, reportedly killing as many as 38 people.[4]

El-Obeid Damage

Yale HRL corroborates targeted damage to SAF equipment and materiel at military positions in El-Obeid, North Kordofan. There have been regular reports of RSF shelling and UAV (drone) attacks on El-Obeid over the past few months.[5] Yale HRL also identifies active burial activity and an increase in burial mounds in El-Obeid in satellite imagery captured on 13-14 July 2025. Yale HRL has also identified an increase in temporary structures consistent with internally displaced persons (IDPs), but due to human security concerns is not be presenting this increase publicly. State officials stated that El-Obeid is home to more than 30,000 displaced persons.[6]

El-Obeid is located on a strategic junction of the B-26 road which runs east – west through the Kordofan region to El-Fasher, North Darfur to the west and Tendelti and Kosti and Rabak to the east. The B-26 in El Obeid intersects with roads heading north to Barah locality north toward Khartoum and south to Dilling and South Sudan.

Attacks from the West: Umm Sumeima

Over the past few months, RSF has been advancing from west to east along the B-26 corridor capturing En-Nahud on May 1, followed by Al-Khoi. Just under 70 km west of El-Obeid on the B-26 road is Umm Sumeima, North Kordofan, where SAF's last battalion west of El-Obeid has been located. Yale HRL has identified thermal scarring and black smoke at a compound in Umm Sumeima, North Kordofan low-resolution satellite imagery from 13 July 2025, corroborating reports of RSF's attack on the battalion. Umm Sumeima has reportedly changed hands and is believed to currently be contested. Both RSF and SAF-aligned forces made statements claiming to control or have recaptured the city.[7] Yale HRL continues to monitor the area.

Control from the North: RSF controls Barah, North Kordofan

Yale HRL identified likely conflict-related damage to structures in Barah, North Kordofan in satellite imagery from 14 July 2025 and a grouping number of vehicles consistent with RSF presence. Barah, controlled by RSF, is approximately 55 kilometers north of El-Obeid on the road to Khartoum. Barah has been under RSF control for a significant period of the conflict. There have been multiple reports of SAF-related airstrikes in the area in the year since the baseline imagery was available.[8] IOM reported that at least 700 families were displaced from Bara locality between 4-9 July 2025.[9] RSF has reportedly attacked multiple communities beyond Shag Alnom around Barra; further investigation is ongoing.[10]

II. Human Security Analysis

RSF's activities are consistent with a rapid offensive to consolidate control as the rainy season hits. The rainy season leads to increased cloud cover and restricts road access – functionally ending the fighting season. SAF's former air superiority is now contested and not assured in key battlespaces – and any reliance on line-of-sight targeting for air capabilities. RSF has reportedly taken out two SAF-aligned UAVs in the past few weeks: in Al-Khoi on 15 July 2025 and in El-Obeid in the week prior.[11] SAF is therefore reliant on logistics and resupply via ground transit – which may not be feasible when the rains make areas unpassable.

The rainy season introduces a range of specific humanitarian and public health impacts. The same restrictions that prevent military resupply during the rainy season are likely to prevent transit of other goods, including food and humanitarian aid. Food insecurity is likely to increase across Sudan, particularly in areas such as internally displaced persons (IDP) camps that have seen a large population increase. The rains are also likely to bring flooding, which can cause severe humanitarian and public health impacts without war. The impacts of flooding range from water contamination and increasing the spread of waterborne disease, including cholera to flooding and contaminating food, crop, and seed stores; to shifting positions of unexploded ordnance (UXO) to damaging homes and critical infrastructure.[12] The North Kordofan State Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid stated that there were least 80 cholera cases including four cholera-related fatalities in El Obeid.[13]

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. Cloud cover, particularly regular cloudcover due to seasonal weather patterns, can obscure what is happening on the ground in electrooptical satellite imagery, reducing the ability to conduct analysis.

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حول المجازر المرتكبة في قرى شمال كردفان بواسطة قوات الدعم السريع" July 15, 2025 https://www.facebook.com/p/%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A6-Emergency-Lawyers-100091728225497/, archived at https://archive.ph/qM1Jh;

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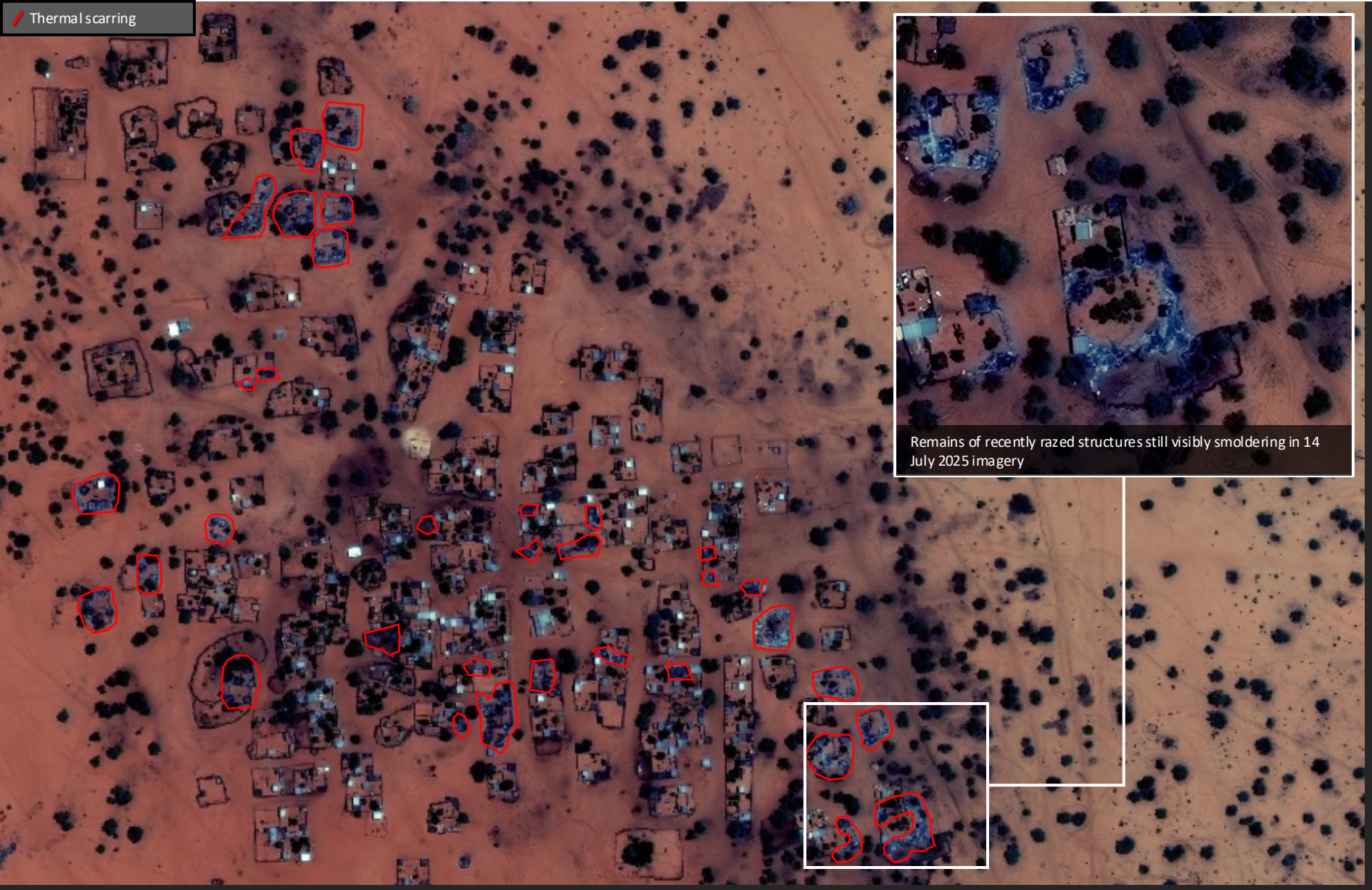
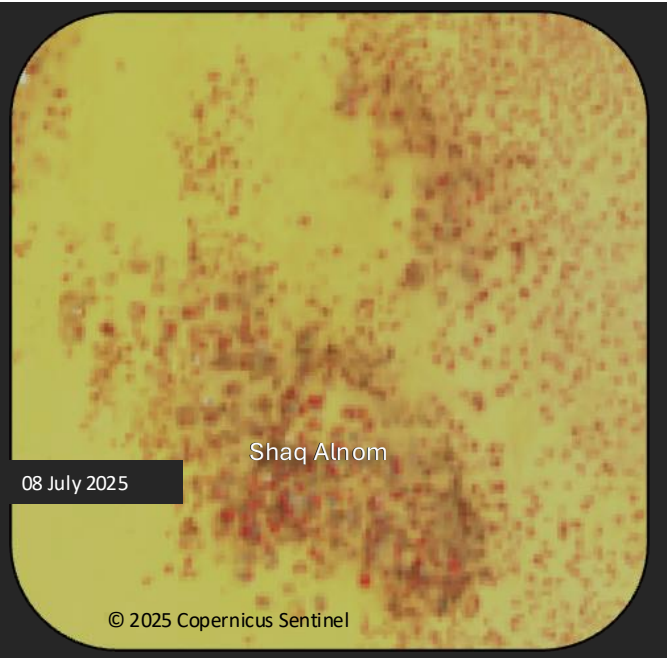
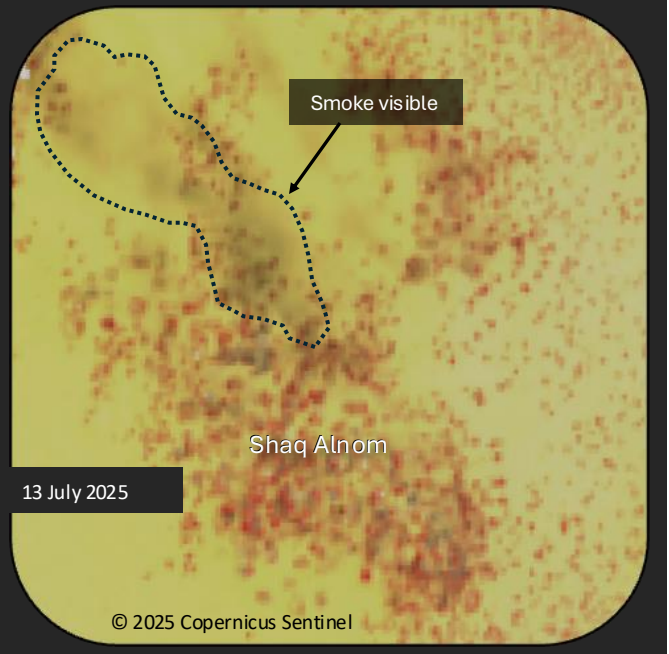


Remains of recently razed structures still visibly smoldering in 14 July 2025 imagery





Shaq Alnom | 14 July 2025

Analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery collected on 14 July 2025 of Shaq Alnom shows the still-smoldering remains of several recently razed structures in the village. The individuated pattern of thermal scarring are indicative of intentional arson attacks on the structures. Analysis of low resolution false-color imagery from the Sentinel-2 sensor shows the presence of smoke emanating from structures in the village not visible on 08 July 2025.

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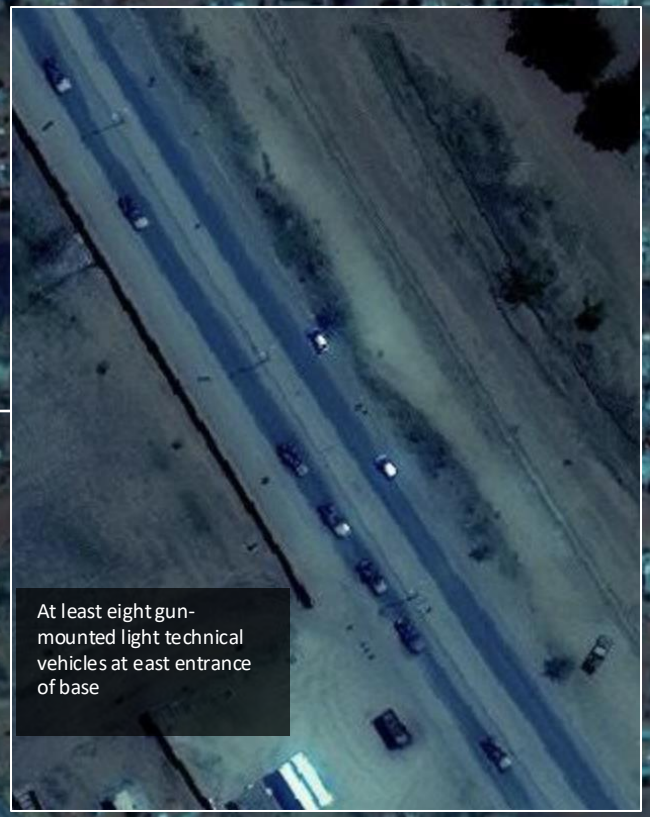
Main battle tank, possibly damaged between 13-14 July 2025



At least eight gun-mounted light technical vehicles at east entrance of base

Munition impact

El-Obeid

SAF 16th Division Base

- Newly observed technical vehicles
- Possibly damaged Main Battle Tank (MBT)
- Munition Impact

Imagery analyzed between 13 and 14 July 2025 over the SAF 16th Division Base shows the new presence of a munition impact consistent with that from artillery fire, a possibly damaged MBT and several light technical and transport vehicles. The majority of these light technical vehicles appear to be gun-mounted and dark green in color.

Wad Al-Barad Cemetery, El-Obeid

DISTURBED EARTH AND ACTIVE BURIALS OBSERVED BETWEEN 12, 13 & 14 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected initially between 12 and 13 July 2025 over the Wad Al-Barad Cemetery shows the new presence of at least to new locations of disturbed earth within the cemetery. Also visible is an exposed hole with a white object in the middle surrounded by a crowd of people. Two open bed trailer trucks are visible approximately 15 m to the east.

Further analysis of imagery collected 14 July 2025 over the cemetery shows at least eight new locations of disturbed earth and a newly exposed hole with a white object observed on the ground approximately 2 m from the hole.

12 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

13 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

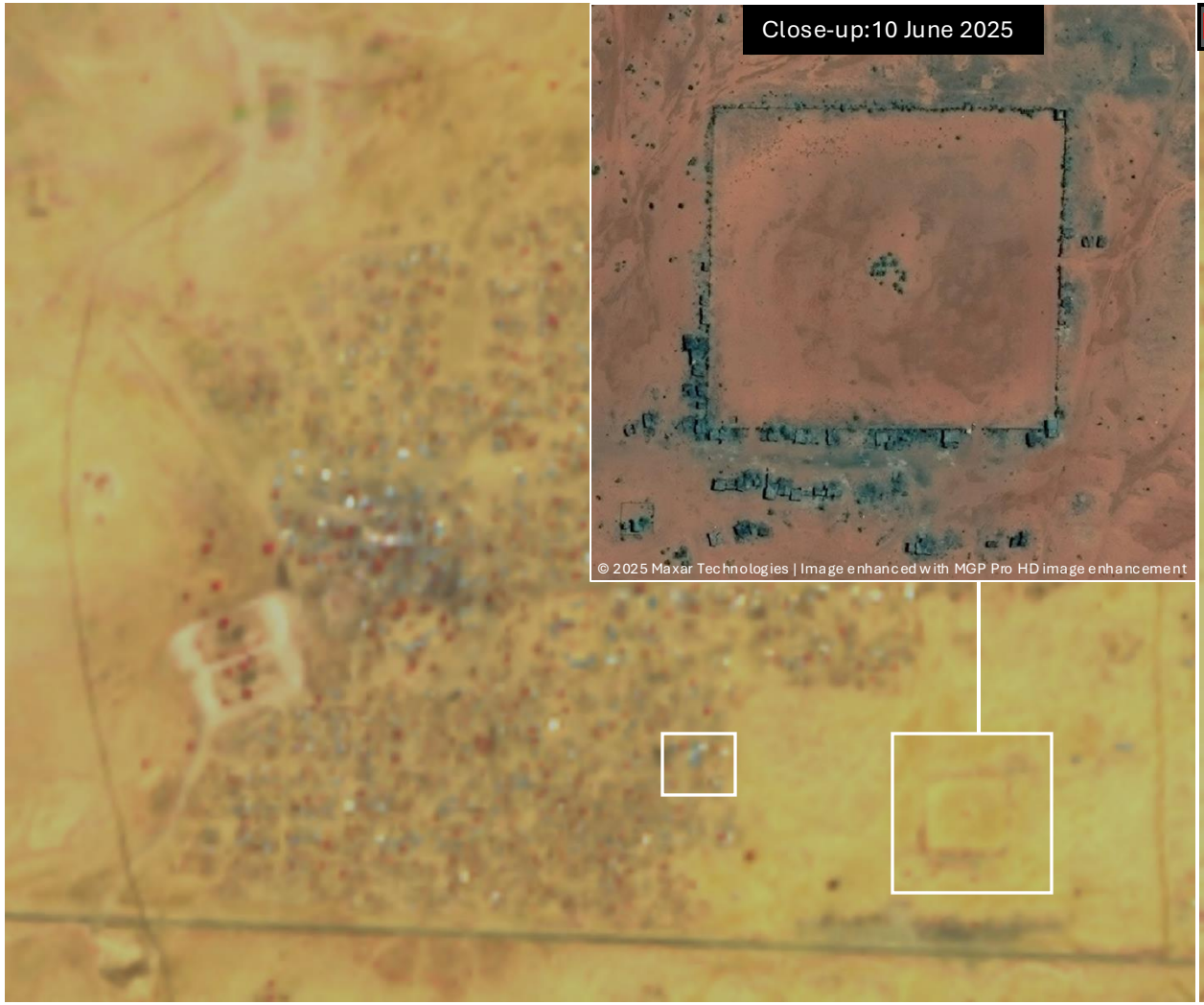
Close-up image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

14 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies

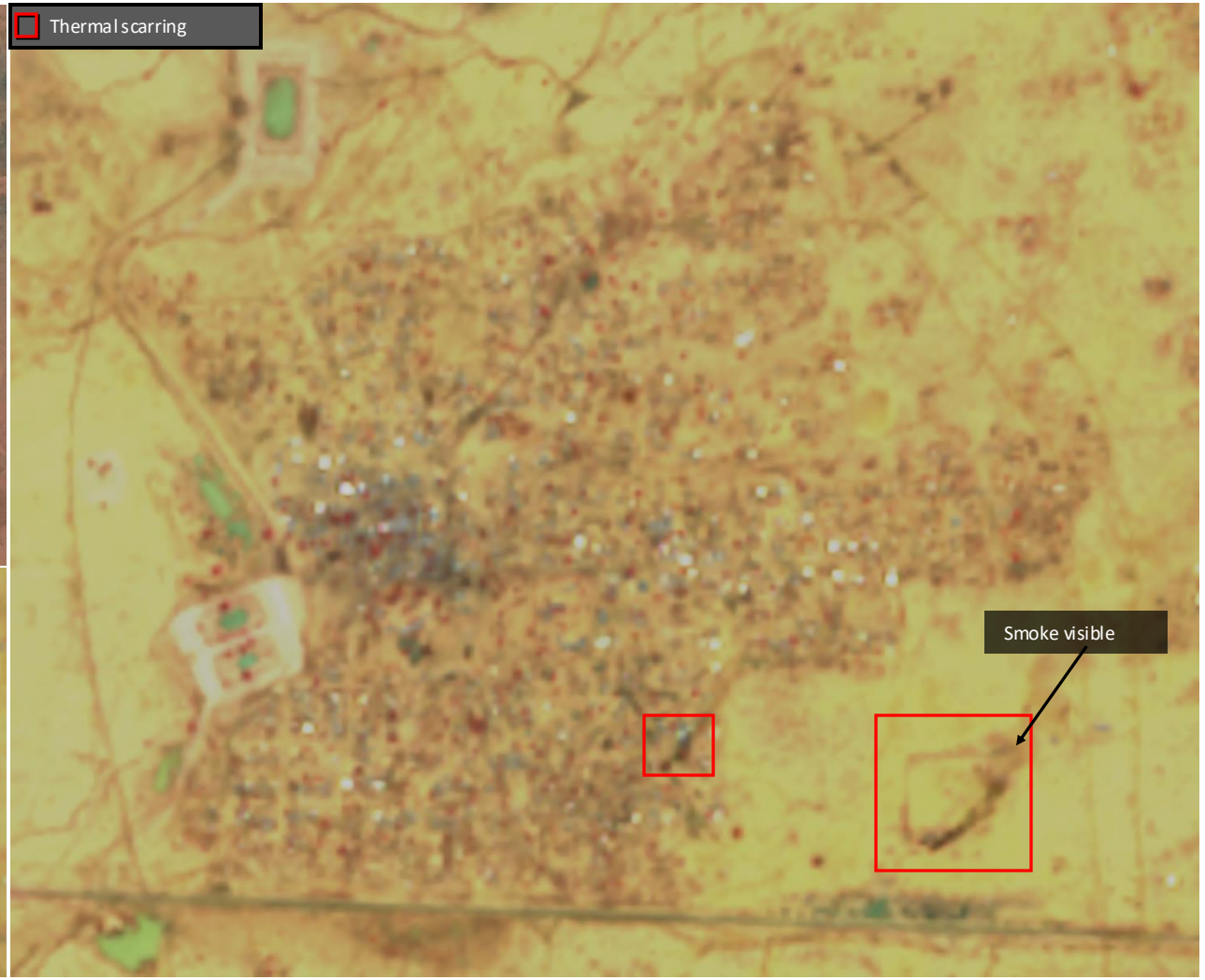
Close-up image enhanced with MGP Pro HD image enhancement

Umm Sumeima | 13 July 2025 | Thermal Scarring and Black Smoke Observed

Sentinel-2 imagery collected on 13 July 2025 over Umm Sumeima shows the presence of at least two different areas of thermal scarring possibly affecting structures, including black smoke visibly emanating from one area. High resolution imagery collected by the Legion-02 satellite on 10 June 2025 shows the location with thermal scarring and black smoke visible as being a compound with tents established against the outside of its perimeter.



30 June 2025 © 2025 Copernicus Sentinel



13 July 2025 © 2025 Copernicus Sentinel

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Bara, North Kordofan

A large grouping of vehicles including technicals is visible in satellite imagery from Bara, North Kordofan captured on 14 July 2025 consistent with likely RSF forces

Bara

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 19 APRIL 2024 AND 14 JULY 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 19 April 2024 and 14 July 2025 over Bara shows damage from munition impacts to multiple structures. There is debris visible around multiple buildings.

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14 July 2025 © 2025 Maxar Technologies USG-Plus

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