HUMAN SECURITY INCIDENT

Confirmed: 19 September Strike on Al-Safiya Mosque

22 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) confirms that at least 78 people,[1] including at least 11 children aged 6 to 15,[2] were killed in an apparent drone strike on the Al-Safiya Mosque in the Al-Daraja Awla neighborhood of El-Fasher on Friday, 19 September 2025 at approximately 4:30am local time.[3] HRL analysis of very high-resolution satellite imagery captured the total destruction of the main portion of the mosque's roof, consistent with an air-delivered munition. HRL also concludes, given the debris spray of the roof in a northwest trajectory, the delivery vehicle likely came from a southern vector.

The impact to the mosque is not consistent with artillery given the size of the blast, the extent of the damage, and the spray pattern of debris. There is no visible ground scarring or crater inside the mosque, indicating that the munition detonated on impact with the mosque roof.

HRL has confirmed that RSF has access to "suicide drone" technology and that these drones are well within range of targets in El-Fasher from a previously utilized launch point at Nyala Airport.[4] The targeted and precise nature of this strike should be urgently investigated as potentially intentional in nature.

Although it could not be immediately confirmed with satellite imagery, additional drone strikes have been reported targeting the Saudi Hospital and the home of North Darfur's secretary general Mohamed Abdullah Adam resulting in the death of Abdullah Adam and his wife.[5]

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[1] Plett-Usher, Barbara and Peter Mwai, "Drone strike on Sudan mosque kills 78, medic tells BBC," *BBC News,* 19 September 2025. Available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp8wzzjze8xo, archived at https://perma.cc/PUJ6-QC8Z.

[2] UNICEF, "At least 11 children reportedly killed in attack on a mosque in Sudan's North Darfur State," 22 September 2025. Available at https://www.unicef.ca/en/press-release/least-11-children-reportedly-killed-attack-mosque-sudans-north-darfur-state, archived at https://perma.cc/EST6-VPDC.

3 Sudan War Monitor, "Worshippers massacred in RSF drone strike on Mosque in El Fasher: Mass civilian casualties deepen fears of ethnic cleansing in North Darfur," 19 September 2025. Available at https://sudanwarmonitor.com/p/worshippers-massacred-in-rsf-drone, archived at https://perma.cc/PLW3-4QGD.

[4] Eltahir, Nafisa. "Exclusive: Long-range 'kamikaze' drones seen near RSF base could worsen conflict in Sudan," *Reuters*, 12 September 2025. Available at https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/long-range-kamikaze-drones-seen-near-rsf-base-could-worsen-conflict-sudan-2025-09-12/, archived at https://perma.cc/W352-457L.

[5] Elbagir, Yousra. "Deaths from mosque attack in besieged Sudanese city 'include at least 11 children'", *Sky News,* 22 September 2025. Archived at https://news.sky.com/story/fight-to-the-death-under-way-in-besieged-sudanese-city-after-mosque-massacre-13436056, archived at https://perma.cc/JG7V-TXQA.

II. 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.

Al-Safiya Mosque, El-Fasher

CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 18-22 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 18 and 22 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows new damage due to munition impacts to the Al-Safiya mosque.

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