

# **Residents of El-Fasher Attempting to Escape as RSF Attacks Continue**

26 September 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**

### **Flight on Foot out of El-Fasher**

The Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) has observed significant numbers of individuals attempting to flee El-Fasher on foot from within the area encircled by earthen walls (hereafter berms). Yale HRL is not releasing the locations of this activity due to protection concerns.

### **Berm Expansion and Enhanced Control Points**

The berms encircling El-Fasher, as of 26 September 2025, have been extended to over 68 kilometers long and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is reinforcing control measures at two northern berm exit points. The berm exit point on the El-Fasher-to-Kutum road shows a new pile of raised earth, likely serving as a checkpoint control measure. The exit point at Mellit Gate shows two light technical vehicles present in satellite imagery. RSF has constructed an additional three kilometers of berms between 22-26 September 2025, moving closer to fully enclosing the western side of El-Fasher. There is only an estimated 3-4 kilometer gap before the city is completely enclosed.<sup>1</sup>

### **Arson Attacks in Abu Shouk**

Yale HRL identifies damage consistent with arson attacks in Abu Shouk Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp. This pattern of damage appears consistent with RSF clearance operations in which it conducts house-to-house arson attacks.

### **Bombardment in Daraja Oula Neighborhood**

Yale HRL identifies bombardment in Daraja Oula neighborhood, south of Abu Shouk IDP Camp and north of the airfield. This area is believed to be the last remaining area with a significant population in El-Fasher. Open sources have reported that RSF has conducted widespread and targeted drone attacks on any human activity inside Daraja Oula, including allegedly targeting a market (27 people allegedly killed) and the Al-Safiya mosque.<sup>1</sup>

### **RSF Multidirectional Attack Ongoing**

Yale HRL assesses, based on imagery analysis collected on 26 September 2025, that a multidirectional attack on El-Fasher is ongoing with heavy weapon support.<sup>2</sup> RSF is present in the northwest near Abu Shouk IDP Camp and the former UNAMID compound. Significant new bombardment by heavy weapons, including likely artillery and drones, is visible near the formal Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) 6<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters. Over 50 heavy munition impacts are seen near Sudan Armed Forces

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<sup>1</sup> The berm encircling El-Fasher has one endpoint in the south on the north side of Zamzam IDP Camp, spirals clockwise up to Shagara, Golo Reservoir, and up to the El-Fasher-to-Kutum road, then rotates east to the B-26's eastern exit point out of El-Fasher. The berm continues down around the city and crosses the B-26's southern exit point to Zamzam and loops around the El-Fasher airfield, which is now inside the initial spiral from Zamzam. Excavators are present near the airfield and construction appears ongoing in satellite imagery collected on 26 September 2025. Currently, 3-4 km remains before the berm is fully enclosed near the airfield in El-Fasher and near Shagara/Golo Reservoir.

(SAF) 6<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters and the Armored Headquarters, Corps of Engineers, and Medical Corps and the El-Fasher Model High Secondary School for Boys. RSF continues to provide support to their forces in El-Fasher; at least 18 light technical vehicles are visible on the Nyala-to-El-Fasher (A-43) road facing northward in satellite imagery near Shingil Tobaya on 15 September 2025, approximately halfway between El-Fasher and Nyala.

### **Fatalities Indicated in Burial Mounds**

Yale HRL identifies over 70 new burial mounds in El-Fasher within approximately one week using satellite imagery collected between 18 and 26 September 2025. A new cemetery has been established in Daraja Oula neighborhood north of the Saudi Hospital with at least 30 burial mounds between 18 and 26 September 2025. There is an increase in 40 burial mounds at new cemetery near the airfield, SAF's *de facto* base of operations, in satellite imagery collected between 18 and 26 September 2025.

## **II. Human Security Analysis**

The presence of large groups visible in satellite imagery walking toward the berm is the first visual confirmation of potential civilians and/or SAF or Joint Forces attempting to escape in satellite imagery. The hardening of at least two exit points in the berm by RSF demonstrates their continued control of any formal route civilians may take to flee the city. As HRL has previously documented, extrajudicial detention, looting, killings, and other gross human rights abuses have been reportedly committed by RSF to civilians attempting to flee through these exit points. The significant artillery bombardment and continued progress of RSF ground forces inside the city over the past 24 hours demonstrates that RSF has no desire for a ceasefire or humanitarian pause and is continuing to prosecute its attack on the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division itself. Artillery damage near the Engineering and Medical Headquarters shows that RSF can target SAF installations with maximum force. HRL assesses that the siege will end when RSF forces penetrate the minefield and other defenses encircling the last garrisons of SAF forces near the airfield in El-Fasher.

If any intervention is to occur to protect civilians targeted by RSF's campaign of ethnic cleansing in Darfur, the time to do so is measured in hours to at most days. The fall of El-Fasher can now happen at any time. Yale HRL has observed during recent sieges on Darfur's regional capitals that ended with systematic attacks on civilians – which the United States government has concluded constitutes genocide – that RSF uses international negotiation mechanisms to buy time to complete attacks on civilian areas as a consistent strategy. The international community must act rapidly and not allow negotiation processes to give RSF a tactical advantage in concluding the siege.

### 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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<sup>1</sup> Sudan War Updates (@sudan\_war) “🇸🇩 This evening, drones belonging to the Rapid Support Militia targeted gatherings of citizens in a small market” X, *formerly known as Twitter*, 23 September 2025. Available at [https://x.com/sudan\\_war/status/1970570719882027016](https://x.com/sudan_war/status/1970570719882027016), archived at <https://perma.cc/5GGH-T7NG>;

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Radio Dabanga “الفاشر: شلل تام وإغلاق للأسواق وسط استمرار القصف والمعارك يوميا” *Radio Dabanga*, 23 September 2025. Available at <https://www.dabangasudan.org/ar/all-news/article/%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%81%d8%a7%d8%b4%d8%b1-%d8%b4%d9%84%d9%84-%d8%aa%d8%a7%d9%85-%d9%88%d8%a5%d8%ba%d9%84%d8%a7%d9%82-%d9%84%d9%84%d8%a3%d8%b3%d9%88%d8%a7%d9%82-%d9%88%d8%b3%d8%b7-%d8%a7%d8%b3%d8%aa%d9%85>, archived at <https://perma.cc/UGT8-98JU>.

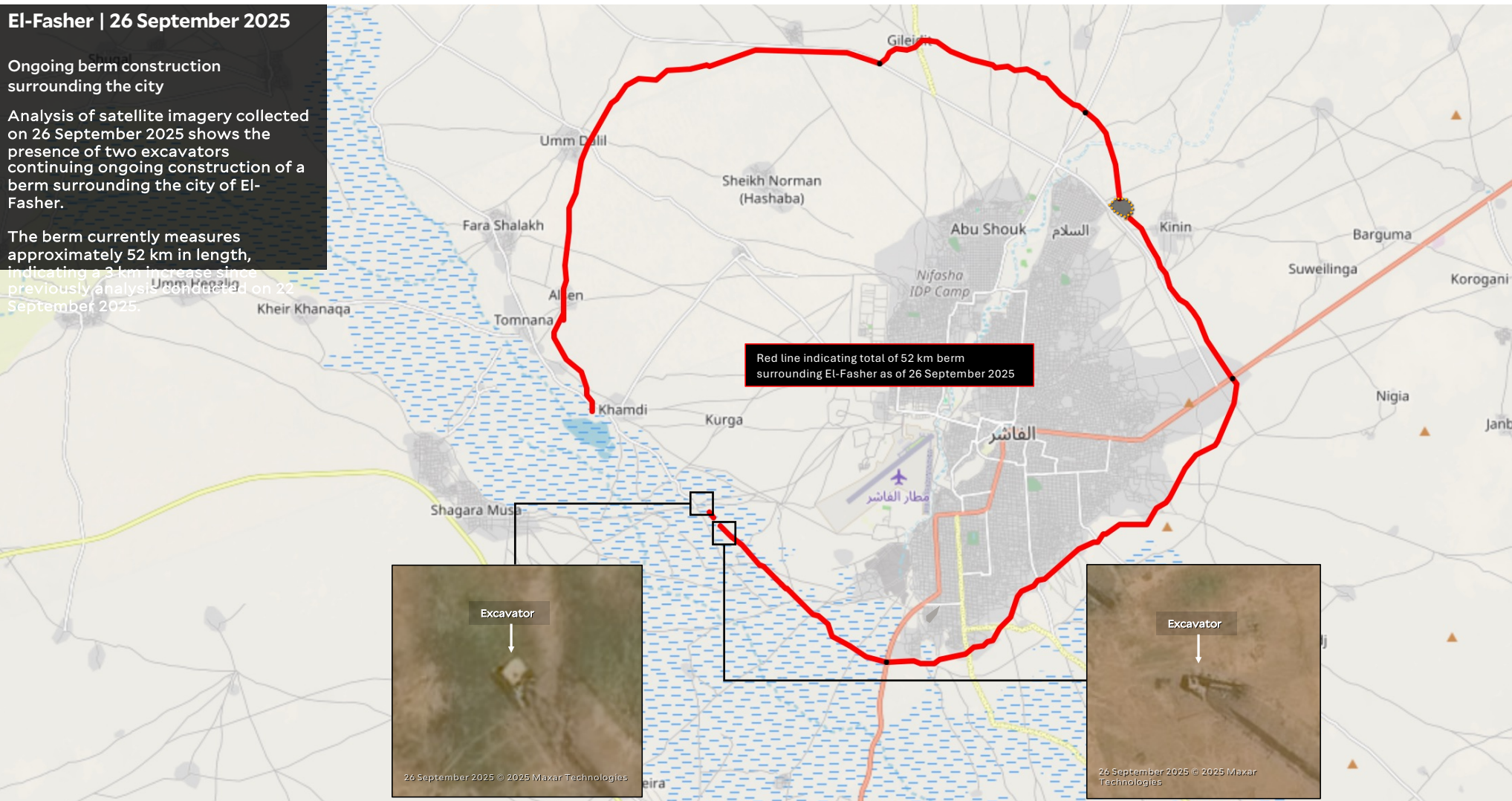
<sup>2</sup> Mohamed Zakarea (@Mohammed\_Zakare) “Fighting in #Elfasher continued late into last night,” X, formerly known as Twitter, 26 September 2025. Available at [https://x.com/Mohammed\\_Zakare/status/1971508682773954682](https://x.com/Mohammed_Zakare/status/1971508682773954682), archived at <https://perma.cc/F94U-RCD4>; HRL\_MMC\_130

## El-Fasher | 26 September 2025

Ongoing berm construction surrounding the city

Analysis of satellite imagery collected on 26 September 2025 shows the presence of two excavators continuing ongoing construction of a berm surrounding the city of El-Fasher.

The berm currently measures approximately 52 km in length, indicating a 3 km increase since previously analysis conducted on 22 September 2025.





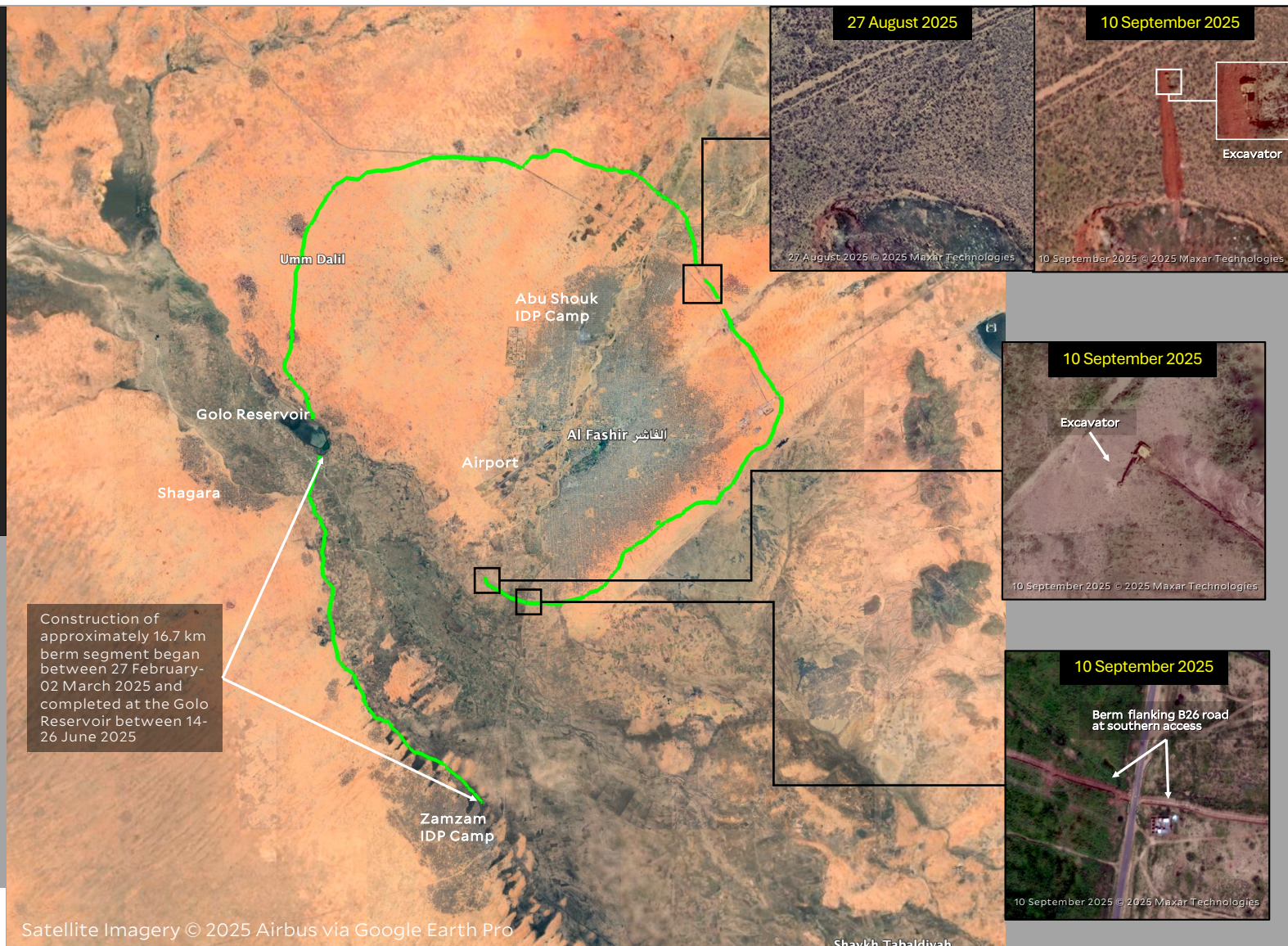
## El-Fasher | 17 September 2025

RSF is finalizing berms, earthen walls, to encircle El-Fasher

The green line represents berms (earthen walls) encircling El-Fasher.

RSF has completed over 68 kilometers of berms encircling El-Fasher as of 26 September 2025. At least 3 km has been added since this map was created on 17 September 2025. Over 35km of berms have been constructed around El-Fasher since 14 July 2025 and construction is ongoing.

The distance from the berm at Shagara /Golo Reservoir to Tawilah is approximately 40 once you reach the A-5 road to Tawilah.





## Berm Exit Point, Kutum-to-El-Fasher Road, El-Fasher

### CHECKPOINT ACTIVITY OBSERVED BETWEEN 22-26 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 22 and 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows the new presence of raised earth, likely as a checkpoint control measure, situated at the western access point of the berm surrounding El-Fasher.



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Image enhanced with MGP Pro + HD image enhancement



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## Mellit Gate, El-Fasher

### CHECKPOINT ACTIVITY OBSERVED BETWEEN 24-26 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 22 and 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows the new presence of two light technical vehicles in a likely checkpoint position at the Mellit gate located in the northern access point of the berm surrounding El-Fasher.



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## Abu Shouk IDP Camp, El-Fasher

### CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 22-26 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 22 and 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows the charred remains of a group of structures within the Abu Shouk IDP Camp.

VIIIRs thermal-detection sensors recorded a fire event occurring at this location on 24 September 2025.



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## Abu Shouk IDP Camp, 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 damage to several structures in the Abu Shouk IDP Camp. This damage is likely consistent with an arson attack.



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## Daraja Oula Neighborhood, El-Fasher

### CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE OBSERVED BETWEEN 22-26 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 22 and 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage to the roof of a building from a munition impact in the Daraja Oula neighborhood.



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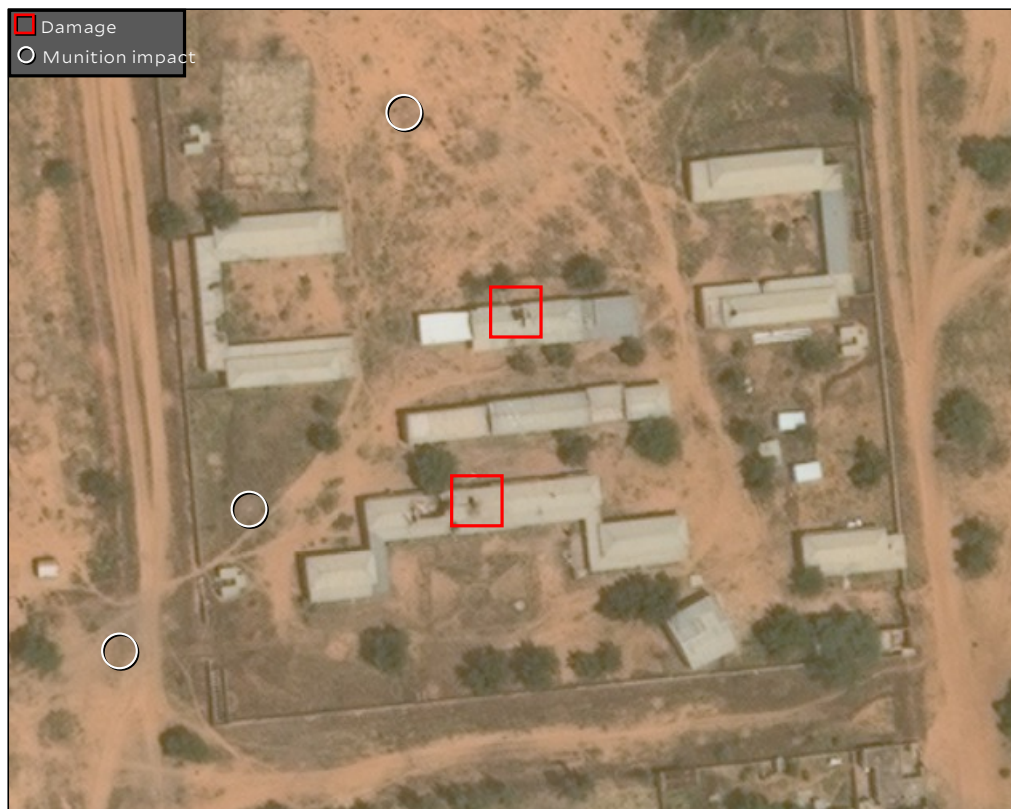
## El-Fasher Model High Secondary School For Boys, El-Fasher

### CONFLICT-RELATED DAMAGE AND MUNITION IMPACT OBSERVED BETWEEN 22-26 SEPTEMBER 2025



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

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 22 and 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows damage to the roofs of multiple buildings from munition impacts at the El-Fasher Model High Secondary School for Boys.



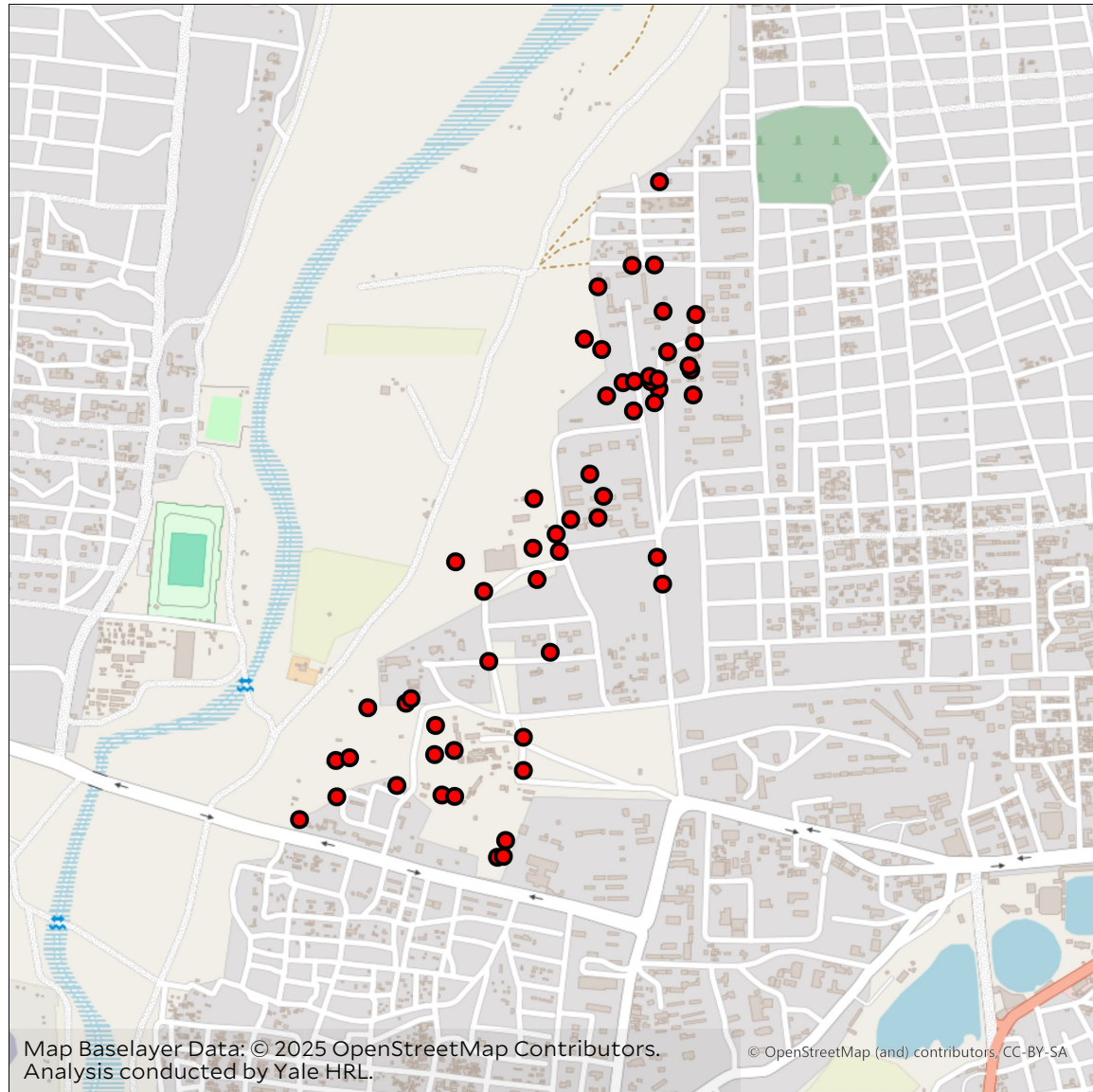
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## El-Fasher | 26 September 2025

● Newly observed munition impacts

Imagery collected on 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows the new presence of over 50 munition impacts near the SAF 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Command between 22-26 September 2025.



## SAF 6<sup>th</sup> Division Base, El-Fasher

### GRAVE ACTIVITY OBSERVED BETWEEN 18-26 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 18 and 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows the increase of approximately 40 grave mounds at a graveyard established in the northwest corner of the SAF 6<sup>th</sup> Division Base.



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## Daraja Oula Neighborhood, El-Fasher

### GRAVE ACTIVITY OBSERVED BETWEEN 18-26 SEPTEMBER 2025

Analysis of satellite imagery collected between 18 and 26 September 2025 over El-Fasher shows the presence of at least 30 grave mounds at a new graveyard established in the Daraja Oula neighborhood of El-Fasher near the UNICEF compound.



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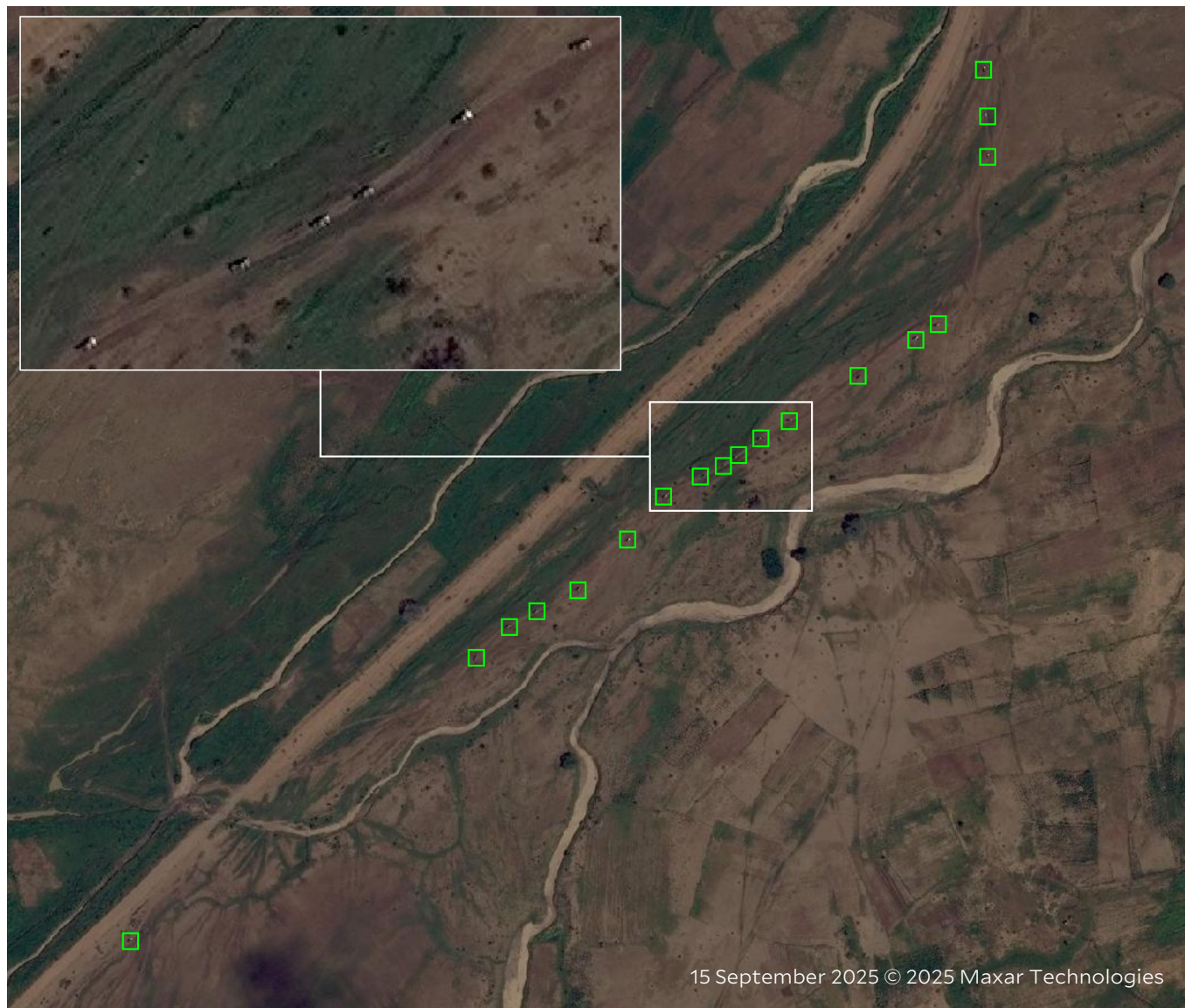


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### Shingil Tobaya | 15 September 2025

#### Light technical vehicle convoy

Imagery collected over Shingil Tobaya shows a convoy of at least 18 light technical vehicles, mostly dark green in color, travelling northward alongside the A43 road towards of El-Fasher.



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