Rapid Support Forces' Siege on El Fasher, North Darfur

Report by

Darfur Advocacy Group

Matmoorat Adeela

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adeela عديلة

مطمورة عديلة

Darfur Advocacy Group
مجموعة مناصرة دارفور

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Executive Summary

The conflict in El Fasher, North Darfur, has escalated into a full-blown humanitarian disaster, with widespread destruction of infrastructure, healthcare facilities, and basic services. The violence, primarily fueled by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), has left civilians trapped in increasingly desperate conditions, unable to access critical resources such as food, water, and healthcare.

Methodology

This report was produced using data collected and verified through a combination of satellite imagery, field reports, interviews with affected populations, and open-source information. Data monitoring and verification were conducted by the Adeela Research Team and the Darfur Advocacy Group (DAG), following international standards for conflict monitoring, data validation, and investigative reporting. Special attention was given to data cleaning protocols to ensure cross-referencing, multiple source verification, and consistency. The analysis particularly focused on the destruction of infrastructure, human rights violations, and humanitarian impacts in key categories: healthcare, infrastructure, education, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

Limitations

The information provided in this report is based on a combination of interviews and satellite imagery. While every effort was made to verify the data, the chaotic nature of the conflict and restricted access to certain areas hindered the ability to obtain a complete picture. Compensation through open-source data was used where firsthand information was unavailable.

Key Findings

1. **Warring Parties**
    - The conflict has been driven by both the RSF and SAF. The RSF has systematically targeted civilians and healthcare infrastructure, while the SAF has conducted indiscriminate airstrikes on civilian-populated areas. These deliberate strategies have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, with civilians suffering the brunt of the destruction.
2. **Infrastructure Destruction**
    - Since June 2024, RSF aerial bombardments and artillery shelling have destroyed an estimated 2,900 structures, concentrated mainly in the eastern half of El Fasher. This destruction has severely impacted critical infrastructure such as healthcare centres, markets, and residential areas. The RSF also bombed public utilities, including the city's electricity station, leaving large parts of El Fasher in darkness.
3. **Targeting of Healthcare Facilities**
    - Healthcare facilities in El Fasher have been deliberately targeted, primarily by RSF forces. Major incidents include the bombing of the IRC clinic in the Abu Shouk IDP camp on June 8, 2024, which resulted in multiple deaths. The only functioning hospital, Fasher South Hospital, was looted and forced to close after repeated attacks. Other facilities, including Babiker Nahar Children's Hospital and Al-Saudi Hospital, have also suffered significant damage, leaving civilians without essential medical services.
4. **Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)**
    - Women and girls in El Fasher have been particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, mainly perpetrated by RSF forces. The destruction of healthcare services has compounded the issue, leaving women unable to access maternal and reproductive care. Reports of rape, sexual assault, and harassment are widespread, intensifying the already dire living conditions for displaced women and children.

5. **Educational and Religious Institutions Destruction**
    - Educational facilities, including Sub-Saharan College and El Fasher University's Centre of Peace Studies, have been severely affected, crippling the city's educational sector. Religious sites have also been targeted, with the bombing of Al-Nour Mosque on August 22, 2024, injuring seven civilians.
6. **Humanitarian Situation**
    - The RSF has repeatedly blocked humanitarian aid trucks and diverted supplies meant for civilians. As a result, the population in El Fasher faces acute shortages of food, clean water, and medical supplies. The Darfur region's Humanitarian Coordinator has highlighted the dire needs of both El Fasher residents and those in nearby IDP camps, such as Al-Zamzam Camp.
7. **Deceased Leaders**
    - The targeted killing of Khamis Abakr, Governor of West Darfur, has raised concerns about politically motivated violence against both civilian and political leaders. His death underscores the violent tactics used by the RSF to eliminate key figures in the region.
8. **Youth Disappearances**
    - Cases of enforced disappearances, particularly involving young men, have been documented. RSF forces are responsible for abducting civilians during hospital raids and attacks on other key locations. This tactic has spread fear among civilians, further destabilizing the region.

Conclusion and Call for Action

The siege on El Fasher has left the city on the verge of collapse, with the humanitarian crisis deepening each day. Immediate international intervention is crucial to protect civilians, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid, and hold both the RSF and SAF accountable for gross violations of international humanitarian law. Urgent pressure must be placed on the RSF to lift the siege and on the SAF to cease airstrikes in civilian areas. Both parties must allow the establishment of humanitarian corridors to ensure the safe passage of civilians and aid workers.

Abbreviations

- **RSF**: Rapid Support Forces
- **SAF**: Sudanese Armed Forces
- **IDP**: Internally Displaced Persons
- **DAG**: Darfur Advocacy Group
- **IRC**: International Rescue Committee
- **MSF**: Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
- **WFP**: World Food Programme
- **SDN**: Sudanese Doctors Network

Introduction

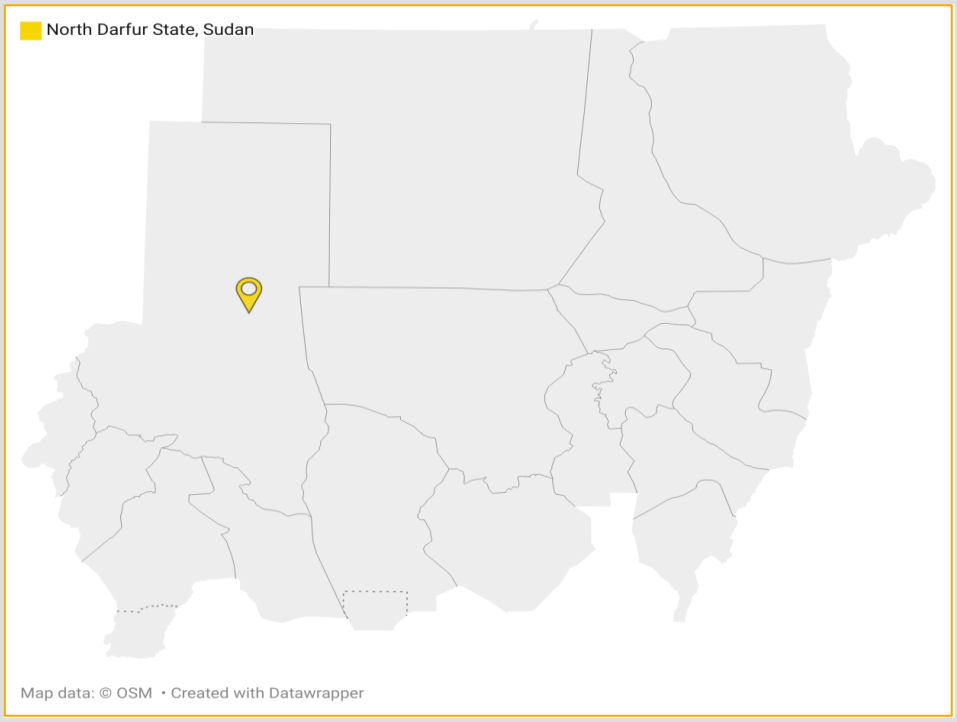
Darfur has been embroiled in conflict since 2003, marked by grave violations of human rights, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. These atrocities were primarily committed by the Janjaweed militia, the precursor to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which operated with the backing of the central government. The conflict was largely ethnically motivated, targeting non-Arab communities such as the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa. Over 300,000 people were killed, and millions more were displaced during this brutal conflict. Just as efforts toward healing and reconciliation from these past traumas were beginning, a new and even more devastating war erupted on April 15, 2023.

The current conflict, which began on April 15, 2023, involves fierce power struggles between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). The violence initially broke out in the capital, Khartoum, and its neighbouring cities of Bahri and Omdurman, but rapidly spread to Darfur, where local militia groups aligned with the RSF launched horrific ethnic cleansing campaigns, particularly around El Geneina in West Darfur. This violence was not limited to Darfur alone but extended to other parts of Sudan, including El Gezira, Sennar, and North Kordofan.

As the conflict escalated, the situation in Darfur deteriorated further. The RSF intensified its operations, committing widespread atrocities that included the looting of public institutions, forced displacement, mass rapes, torture, and killings. Over time, the RSF gained control of most of the major cities in Darfur including Nyala, Zalingei, El Geneina, and El Daein. However, El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, remains under the control of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

Background

El Fasher holds both historical and strategic significance. As the capital of the former Darfur Sultanate before its fall in 1916, it remains a key city in the region. North Darfur, situated in southwestern Sudan, has 18 localities, with El Fasher as its largest city. The city's strategic location has made it a critical battleground for both warring factions, given its proximity to the borders of Libya and Chad, as well as its relative distance to Egypt, which further underscores its importance in the ongoing conflict. El Fasher was the only capital city in the region and has been a target of attacks not only in the current conflict but also during the war of 2003 when rebel forces assaulted it.



After the conflict reached Darfur Cities, Elfashir City became a refuge for people fleeing nearby villages and towns, due to the RSF intrusion and the city became full of internally displaced people, which created a very dire humanitarian condition.

Nevertheless, it did not prevent the Rapid Support Forces from targeting the city, so since the 10th of May, there have been repeated attempts by the RSF to control the city, which resulted in widespread violations of human rights among

civilians that include the forced displacement, killing injuries, destruction of infrastructures, poverty, and looting.

This report aims to highlight the current situation in the Elfasher, humanitarian effects, and the violations that civilians are exposed to due to the ongoing siege carried out by RSF since the 10th of May 2024. From that moment El Fasher was exposed to intensive artillery bombing from RSF to Residential Neighbourhoods, shelter centres, and hospitals which resulted in widespread destruction and heavy casualties.

This report will cover incidents in El Fasher City, from the 10th of May 2024 to the 1st of August 2024.

What is Behind the El Fashir Conflict?

The geopolitical significance of El Fasher plays a crucial role in the ongoing conflict between the warring parties. As the capital of North Darfur, the largest state in the region, covering approximately 2,960 square kilometers—nearly half of Darfur and around 12% of Sudan's total area—El Fasher holds strategic importance. The city connects to at least seven other states, including Khartoum, and borders three neighbouring countries: Libya, Chad, and Egypt. This advantageous position makes North Darfur a key hub for both military and logistical operations.

El Fasher is also the last major stronghold of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and their allied forces. Should it fall into the hands of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), it would mark a significant shift in the conflict, potentially creating a new political landscape that could lead to the division of Sudan into two states. From a military standpoint, RSF control of El Fasher would allow for smoother movement into eastern Sudan, supported by enhanced logistical chains from neighbouring countries.

The SAF, along with its allies, fights fiercely to maintain control of El Fasher, not only for military reasons but also due to deep cultural and ethnic ties. The majority of fighters allied with SAF come from African tribes such as the Zaghawa, Masalit, and Fur, who view El Fasher as their historical capital. To them, any RSF seizure of the city would symbolise the complete takeover of Darfur by Arab forces, reigniting

painful memories of the settlement campaigns carried out by Arab militias in their villages during the 2003 war. The atrocities of genocide and war crimes committed over the last two decades have left many in these African tribes believing that coexistence with groups lacking fundamental respect for human rights and ethics is impossible.

The RSF is determined to seize El Fasher to bolster its military standing and create a complex political situation in Sudan. Control of the city could reshape internal and regional alliances, especially given the international interest in Darfur's resources. If El Fasher falls, it would mark a turning point in the Sudanese conflict, influencing the balance of power in the African Sahel amid competing international interests under a rapidly evolving global order.

In light of these dynamics, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2736 in June, calling on the RSF to lift the siege of El Fasher. This resolution, along with numerous calls from regional and international actors, urges all warring parties to cease hostilities and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid, particularly in Darfur, where famine has been declared.

The War Parties in El Fasher

Since the outbreak of war on April 15, 2023, the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has engulfed the city of El Fasher. The RSF made multiple attempts to seize control of the 6th Infantry Division in the city but were unsuccessful. These intense battles caused widespread destruction and significant loss of life, prompting the local community to initiate efforts to mediate and prevent further violence to protect the safety of civilians.

Although these initiatives initially successfully mitigated the conflict, they were short-lived. Fighting soon resumed, and the situation further escalated with the involvement of additional armed movements that had maintained neutrality at the start of the conflict. Among these were the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), led by Minni Arko Minnawi, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led by Jibril Ibrahim, as well as defectors from the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLA)-Transitional Council Led by Salahuddin Adam Toor, the Gathering of Sudanese Liberation Forces (GSLF), Led by Abdalla Yahya Ali, and the Sudanese Coalition.

As the conflict intensified, these groups abandoned their stance of neutrality and aligned themselves with the Sudanese army in El Fasher, joining the fight against the Rapid Support Forces. This shift marked a significant escalation in the conflict, as more factions became actively involved, further complicating the dynamics of the war in El Fasher.

Methodology

The report employed many methodologies to collect data, encompassing open and closed sources. The closed sources were focused on field observations and interviews carried out by the DAG (Darfur Advocacy Group) team.
The open-source data was gathered, restored, and analyzed by the Matmoorat Adeela team, using various tools to ensure the accuracy, effectiveness, and completeness of data.

Closed-Source Data

1) **Field observations**

The Darfur Advocacy Group (DAG) team started the observations from 10/5/2024 to 10/8/2024 and conducted 15 on-ground observations in El Fasher and surrounding areas to gather real-time data. Observations included documenting the extent of destruction, identifying affected infrastructure, and recording direct impacts on civilians.

2) **Interviews**

Five interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, including affected individuals, community leaders, and healthcare workers. These interviews provided qualitative insights into the experiences of those directly impacted by the conflict.
Interview data was transcribed, coded, and categorized to ensure the accuracy and completeness of data.

Open-Source Data

After the problem was clearly defined, open-source data was collected from publicly accessible digital social media platforms, public records, and online databases without requiring special legal status or unauthorized access based on the Berkeley Protocol on open-source investigation standards.
Monitored data was gathered based on rigorous monitoring standards for collecting information, starting with setting clear objectives to assess the humanitarian situation and identify the affected areas. Then, reliable sources were identified, such as reports and news from NGOs, INGOs, MSF, the UN, Al Jazeera, and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Telegram, etc.) using live and advanced social media search tools.

Our data was collected and preserved in spreadsheets and databases designed specifically for each dataset segment, with Matmoorat Adeela's open-source team and the Darfur Advocacy Group (DAG) both contributing to this process. The data was continuously cleaned to capture ongoing changes and updates. After the cleaning process, the information was archived to ensure preservation. Finally, verification was applied to check the credibility and accuracy of the data. This rigorous investigation process cross-referenced multiple independent sources using element determination (such as geo-location findings, time, date, perpetrators, context, etc.) to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the data.

Limitations

The methodology acknowledges certain limitations, such as:

1. The field observer's access to the affected population was limited due to ongoing security threats from different warning parties.
2. Network disruption significantly hindered the data collection, limiting communication with field teams, delaying data transmission, and preventing real-time updates.
3. The possibility of underreporting in casualty figures, resulting in a lack of access to a complete number of victims.

Monitoring Findings

The following section presents critical findings from the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations in El Fasher. Our monitoring reveals a disturbing pattern of indiscriminate bombing that has resulted in widespread civilian casualties and destruction. Additionally, we have observed the destruction of vital infrastructure. Most alarmingly, there is a growing trend of enforced disappearances among youth, raising grave concerns about the use of fear and repression as tools of control. These findings highlight the urgent need for accountability and intervention to prevent further violations and protect vulnerable populations.

1. Use of Indiscriminate Weapons

The indiscriminate use of artillery in El Fasher by the RSF has resulted in severe destruction of residential areas and public institutions. According to an MSF report, more than 500 individuals have been killed and approximately 2,500 injured due to these attacks.

Moreover, on June 18, 2024, the Abu Shouk IDP camp was subjected to shelling, leading to the deaths of 10 civilians and injuring 26 others, including children, women, youth, and the elderly.



A Google image demonstrates the location of the Abu Shouk IDP camp in North Darfur.

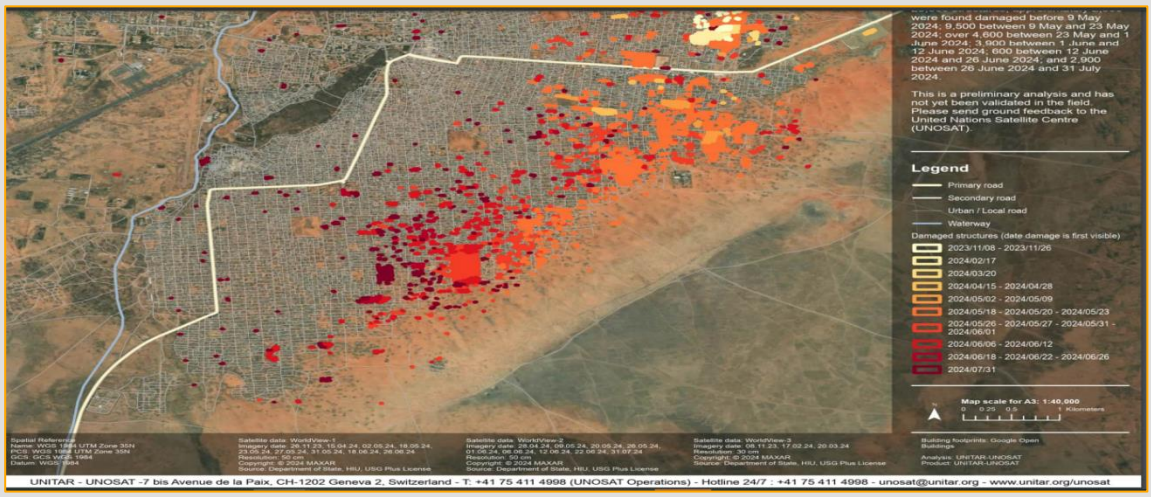
In response to this indiscriminate bombing, the Darfur Advocacy Group compiled a preliminary list of names from open-source data, which includes both fatalities and injuries. According to the data collected from Facebook, there are 116 reported deaths and 209 injuries, totaling 325 affected individuals. This data highlights the significant threat the ongoing conflict poses to the civilians' lives in El Fasher, It is important to note that these figures only represent individuals whose families had internet access and were able to report the incidents on Facebook. Therefore we believe the actual number of victims is likely higher.

A gender and age group analysis of the data indicates that 173 of the affected individuals are female, encompassing both deaths and injuries, while 152 are male. Furthermore, 35 of the victims were children, with 20 injured and 15 deceased. One of the noticed patterns was that the most affected populations of these attacks tend to be residents of Abu Shouk IDP camp which alarms that it is one of the locations that is being intensely targeted.

2. Destruction of Infrastructure

The ongoing conflict in El Fasher has resulted in unprecedented levels of destruction across the city. The relentless bombings by the RSF, combined with artillery shelling, have caused widespread devastation to both public and private infrastructure. Key services essential for daily survival, such as markets, healthcare centres, and utilities, have been severely impacted, further complicating the already dire living conditions for civilians. The damage inflicted on these essential facilities has made it nearly impossible for residents to access vital resources like food, medicine, and clean water.

The continuous bombing led to the wide destruction of houses and markets which led to a departure from service resulting in the difficulty of residents in accessing their basic needs. More than five markets and 18 healthcare centres were dysfunctioned due to the RSF bombing and attack, according to the satellite imagery report between 26 June 2024 and 31 July 2024. In total, there are more than 2,900 structures estimated to have been damaged or destroyed, most of them are heavily concentrated in the eastern half of the city.



The screenshot demonstrates the satellite imagery shared by UNitar on July 31, 2024.

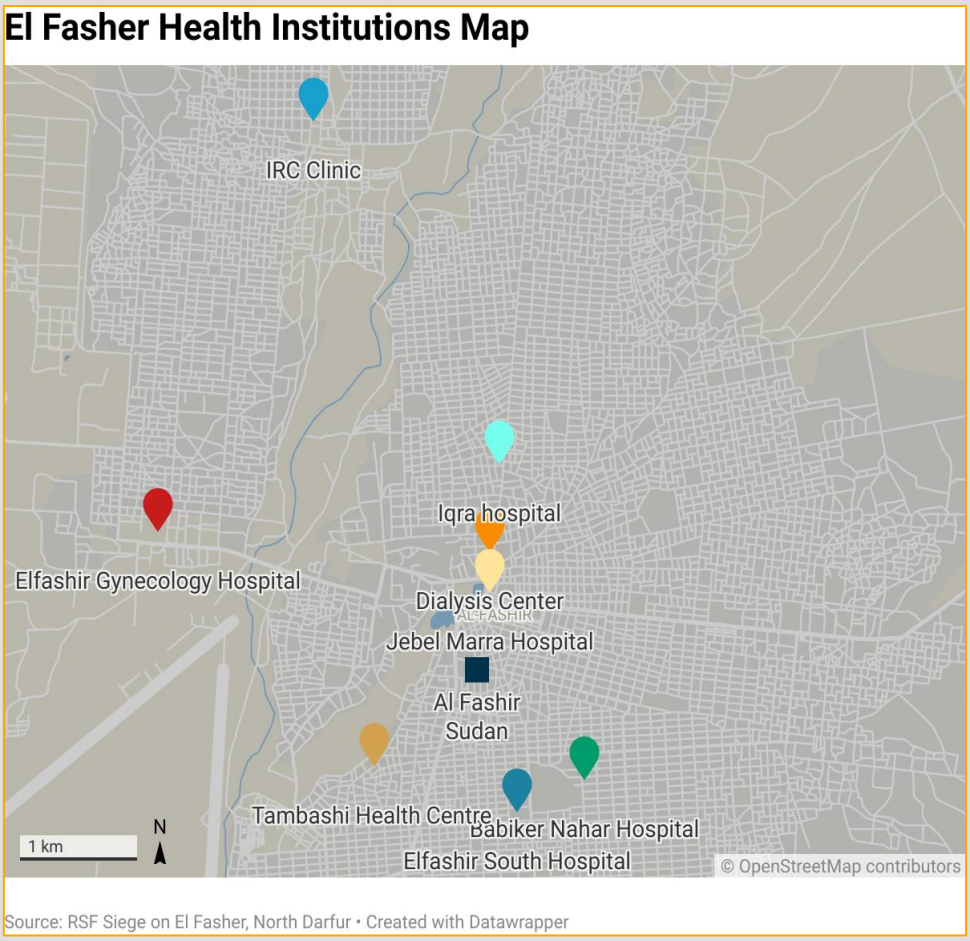
The attacks on institutions extended beyond the health sector and expanded to reach other critical infrastructure including the bombing and damage of electricity station.



A Google image demonstrates the location of the Elfashir Electricity Station.

3. Targeting Hospitals and Healthcare Centres

Targeting healthcare facilities is a remarkable pattern in El Fasher by both warring parties, where the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have systematically targeted and destroyed several public institutions, with a particular focus on hospitals and healthcare centres. On June 8, 2024, the RSF bombed the IRC clinic in the Abu Shouk IDP camp in El Fasher, using three artillery shells that resulted in multiple casualties among civilians and medical staff. Notable victims included Dr. Ahmed Adam Abdullah, security guard Ahmed Osman Abdul-Elrahman, and a three-year-old child named Amaasi Amir Haren, the daughter of a clinic volunteer.





A Google image demonstrates the location of the IRC Clinic.

On 27 June, the therapeutic nutrition centre was bombed and destroyed by RSF, The centre was operated by the World Food Program (WFP) within the Abu Shouk camp for displaced persons. This incident has resulted in the destruction of essential therapeutic supplies intended for the treatment of malnourished children in the camp.

The following day, on May 25, 2024, the RSF stormed Fasher South Hospital, committing severe atrocities against patients and medical staff. This was the only hospital in the region that was still providing services at the time. During the attack, the RSF looted the hospital, stealing drugs, and cash. Medical staff were abused, and Dr. Fuzi Ebrahim suffered a broken leg. The attack ultimately forced the hospital to close.



Source: Al Arabiya Sky News on 07/09/2024.

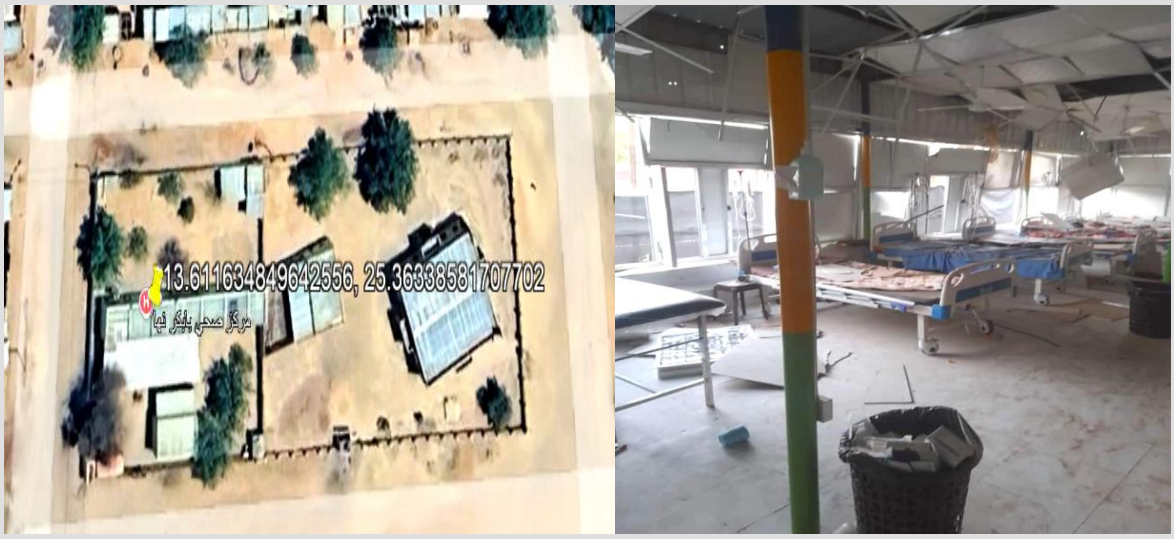


Imagery of the aftermath of the destruction of Elfasher South Hospital.



A Google image demonstrates the location of the Elfashir South Hospital.

On May 11, 2024, an airstrike carried out by the SAF occurred 50 meters away from the Babiker Nahar Children's Hospital supported by MSF in El Fasher, as per the interview the DAG took with one of the people on the ground. According to an MSF report, the bombing resulted in the collapse of the roof, and the deaths of two children receiving treatment, as well as one caregiver.



A Google image demonstrates the location of the Babiker Nahar Children's Hospital.

On June 21, 2024, the RSF bombed the Alsaudi Hospital, targeting the pharmacy and killing pharmacy assistant, Amna Ahmed Bakhit. This is the tenth time the hospital has been attacked since the fighting began in El Fasher. This hospital was the only reference facility for obstetrics and gynaecology in the entire region, providing critical care for women in giving birth and other serious obstetrical cases.



Imagery of the aftermath of the bombing of Al Saudi Hospital.



A Google image demonstrates the location of the Elfashir Gynecology Hospital.

On June 22, 2024, the RSF bombed a dialysis centre that was providing care to at least 90 patients as per DAG interviews. Additionally, the central medical supply facility was attacked in the late evening on an unspecified date.



An Imagery demonstrating the infrastructure destruction of the dialysis center.



The screenshot of satellite imagery demonstrates the geolocations of the Dialysis Center.

The attacks continued into July and August, with the RSF bombing Jebel Marra Hospital, destroying the third floor.



Pictures of Jebel Marra Hospital before and after the attack

On the third of August, El Fasher Resistance Committees shared a post on Facebook accusing the RSF of bombing the hospital, as per SDN (Sudanese Doctors Network), and on the same day, the RSF bombed the Tambasi Health Center, resulting in the near-total destruction of the center



Pictures of Tambashi Health Care Centre's destruction.



The screenshot of satellite Imagery represents Tambasi Health Care Centre on Google Earth.

Summary of Attacks on Health Institutions in El Fasher

Name of the hospital	*Date of attack*	*The location/area*	*Suspected to be attacked by*
IRC clinic	8/6/2024	Abshook IDPs camp El Fashir	RSF
Fasher south hospital	The hospital was attacked five times on different Dates 21/5/2024 25/5/2024 31/5/2024 2/6/2024 8/6/2024	Alsalam area	RSF
Babiker Nahar	11/5/2024	Alsalam area	SAF
Obstetrics & Gynec hospital	21/6/2024	Draga Oula	RSF
AL Saudi hospital	The hospital was attacked more than ten times and these are The recorded dates according to the MSF report 10/5/2024 19/5/2024 21/6/2024 27/6/2024 29/6/2024	Draga Oula	RSF
EL-Igra hospital	25/6/2024	Al Quba area	RSF
Dialysis Center	23/6/2024	Al Quba area	RSF
Jebel Marra hospital	2/7/2024	Al Sug	RSF
Tambasi health centre	3/8/2024	Altombasi area	RSF

4. Youth-enforced Disappearance

RSF took some youths as hostages during the El Fasher South Hospital attack. From the 8th of June until the writing of this report, no one knew their place (for instance, Muhsin Elgali and Abdu-Elfatah Ebrahim were taken during this attack).

RSF took many youths on the roads during their fleeing, prevented them from leaving the city, and targeted them by killing them.

5. Conflict Associated Gender-Based Violence

Women are exposed to sexual assaults from the RSF. There are numerous violations that RSF committed against them, which include rapes, sexual assaults, insecurity, and difficulties in accessing basic needs (like food, water, and healthcare). Pregnant women and new moms face many challenges in such a situation that lack basic healthcare in a continuously violated setting.

6. Destruction of Public Facilities and Educational Institutions

El Fasher Electricity Station was initially seized by the RSF and subsequently bombed by Sudanese army aircraft, resulting in its destruction and loss of functionality. Educational institutions and places of worship also suffered from these assaults.

On August 26, 2024, the Sub-Saharan College was heavily damaged in a bombing carried out by the RSF.



Imagery of the aftermath of the bombing of the Sub-Saharan College.

Similarly, the Centre of Peace Studies and the Scientific Library at El Fasher University were bombed by the RSF on August 22, 2024, causing significant destruction.



The screenshot of satellite imagery demonstrates the geolocations of the Peace Studies Centre

Religious sites were not spared either. Al Nour Mosque was bombed on August 22, 2024, injuring seven individuals. Additionally, several markets were targeted. For instance, the El-Mawashi market was bombed on May 12, 2024, which resulted in the death of 2 people, and on July 2, 2024, El Fasher Central Market (Soog Kabir) was bombed, with numerous photographs of the damage circulating in the media.

7. Humanitarian Conditions

The humanitarian conditions in ELfasher are significantly deteriorating, and the civilian residents are facing severe deficiency of food, clean water, and medical services as per a UN report. Furthermore, the number of residents forced to leave their places to other safe areas increases the situation's complexity (displaced people find themselves in difficult living conditions). The overcrowded residential areas and shelter centers are continuously bombed by the RSF which increases the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe. However, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Darfur region, Mr Abdu-Elbagy Mohammed, has issued an urgent call for humanitarian assistance in response to the critical needs of Al Zamzam camp and El Fasher. A total of 49 aid trucks were set to enter the region via Adary. However, all of these trucks were redirected by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to other locations. Some of the trucks are being held by the RSF in Kabkabiya and Millet (Millet is approximately one hour from El Fasher), as well as in Kooma, where a

significant quantity of humanitarian aid is also being reserved. However, MSF mentioned that RSF was hindering the aids to pass to the El Fasher. In response to these developments, the president of the RSF negotiation committee, Omer Hamdan, stated that they had not been informed of these aid trucks' entrance and they had suddenly found these trucks in their control areas, so they had to do some due diligence.

Conclusion and Call for Immediate Action

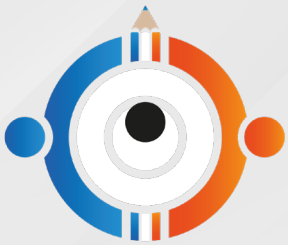
The RSF siege on El Fasher has resulted in significant human suffering and a dire humanitarian situation. The city's infrastructure has been decimated, healthcare services obliterated, and civilians subjected to relentless violence and deprivation. Immediate intervention is needed to address the humanitarian needs and protect the civilian population from ongoing atrocities.

Urgent action is required to compel the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to allow the safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to affected areas, ensuring that relief reaches those in need without further delay. International and regional actors must exert pressure on the RSF to lift the siege in El Fasher and on the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) to cease airstrikes in residential areas populated by civilians, preventing further loss of innocent lives. Immediate action is also necessary to press the RSF to halt artillery shelling and the deliberate destruction of health facilities, which are critical for the survival and well-being of civilians caught in the conflict. In addition to this given the RSF's history of ethnic-targeted violence in West Darfur, their invasion into North Darfur could escalate into a genocidal campaign against civilians, particularly targeting specific ethnic groups. The international community must act swiftly to prevent a repetition of atrocities similar to those witnessed in West Darfur. Both warring parties must be pressured to establish and respect safe passages for civilians and humanitarian workers, and to take all necessary measures to protect civilians as mandated by international humanitarian law.

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