



### Researchers Document That the RSF is Trying to Cover Up Mass Atrocities in El Fasher

A new report by the Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) has documented the Rapid Support Forces' (RSF) systematic multi-week campaign to erase evidence of mass atrocities committed in El Fasher. Since the RSF's takeover of the city back in late October, the group has engaged in a massive operation to try and cover up its crimes through the burial, burning, and removal of human remains across the capital of North Darfur. Satellite imagery has confirmed a plethora of significant earth disturbances that are consistent with the presence of mass graves, including sites at a mosque and hospital, the latter of which the RSF repurposed as a detention facility. Yale's HRL also tracked hundreds of clusters of objects that are deemed to be human remains, with activity and changes at these locations indicating continuing removal. Monitoring groups have estimated that between 1,500 and 2,000 civilians were killed in the first days after El Fasher fell, and Yale researchers now assess that the total number of bodies disposed of likely reaches the tens of thousands.

While precise casualty figures in El Fasher are difficult to verify due to the communications blackout and ongoing violence, it is believed that an appalling at least 60,000 civilians have been killed or massacred since the RSF seized the city in late October. Furthermore, around 250,000 civilians were trapped in the city at the time of its fall and the HRL's recent findings suggest that the vast majority of these individuals may have been killed by the RSF, died, or remain in hiding. On top of all of this, El Fasher was officially declared to be suffering from famine in the preceding months, as hundreds of thousands face starvation as a result of the prolonged 18-month siege on the city. In order to document evidence, HRL researchers and investigators utilized a mix of high-resolution satellite imagery, thermal data, and open-source intelligence to shed light on the scale of the RSF atrocities. Images taken showed extensive reddish discoloration consistent with large-scale blood pooling, while satellite sensors detected thermal anomalies and instances of burning objects signifying efforts to burn remains and destroy forensic evidence. HRL was able to geolocate videos as well that were posted by RSF members which showed soldiers shooting civilians attempting to flee the city.

The horrific RSF atrocities that have been documented include execution-style killings, sexual violence, the obstruction of humanitarian aid, and the targeting of medical facilities. The group has carried out systematic house-to-house raids, sexual assaults, and executions of those sheltering in neighborhoods or attempting to flee the violence. They have also maintained a

blockade on food, medicine, and other humanitarian aid, while destroying or severely damaging El Fasher's last functioning medical facilities. A recent United Nations report released earlier this week even documented the heinous killing of over 1,000 civilians in a nearby displacement camp as a part of the RSF's ruthless siege on the region leading up to its takeover of El Fasher in October. One of the troubling elements surrounding the circumstances in the area is the fact that more than 150,000 residents remain unaccounted for in the time since then – fueling fears that the actual death toll could be much higher than what is currently known.

As the RSF carries out a systematic campaign to hide evidence of its mass atrocities in El Fasher, the current status of the city has been described as a ghost town. In addition to proof of the RSF efforts to cover up its deplorable crimes, satellite imagery from Yale researchers and others have shown a complete lack of civilian activity with tens of thousands believed to be trapped and hiding under horrific conditions. Last week, the European Union launched an emergency air bridge to deliver supplies while United Nations aid agencies announced a tentative deal to access El Fasher, however safety assessments are still ongoing and desperately needed UN aid convoys have not yet entered the city. With the RSF maintaining control in El Fasher, heavy fighting has recently shifted to the nearby Kordofan region. Human rights officials have warned that the spread of fighting into Kordofan risks creating a similar situation to what has unfolded in El Fasher.