

SUDAN

Conflict Observatory

SITUATION REPORT

IMPACT ON CIVILIANS IN BABANUSA, WEST KORDOFAN

JANUARY 22 - MAY 9 2024

Scope and Methodology

This report was produced in partnership with George Mason University as part of the Sudan Conflict Observatory (SCO), with the support of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, United States Department of State. This report does not necessarily represent the views of George Mason University or the United States Government.

Data were gathered from open sources accessible through telecommunication networks and the internet, followed by analysis and synthesis from project researchers. Planetscope and MAXAR satellite imagery illustrate the reported incident locations and thermal activity. These locations of thermal activities are captured by the Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The images generated from FIRMS can indicate thermal activities from military assaults. Non-military events, such as house fires and forest fires, could also be the source of such images.

Inquiries about this report can be submitted via: <https://contactus.conflictobservatory.org/>

Executive Summary and Background

This report summarizes the impact on civilians, especially civilian infrastructure, from fighting involving the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Babanusa, West Kordofan, between January 22 and May 6 2024.

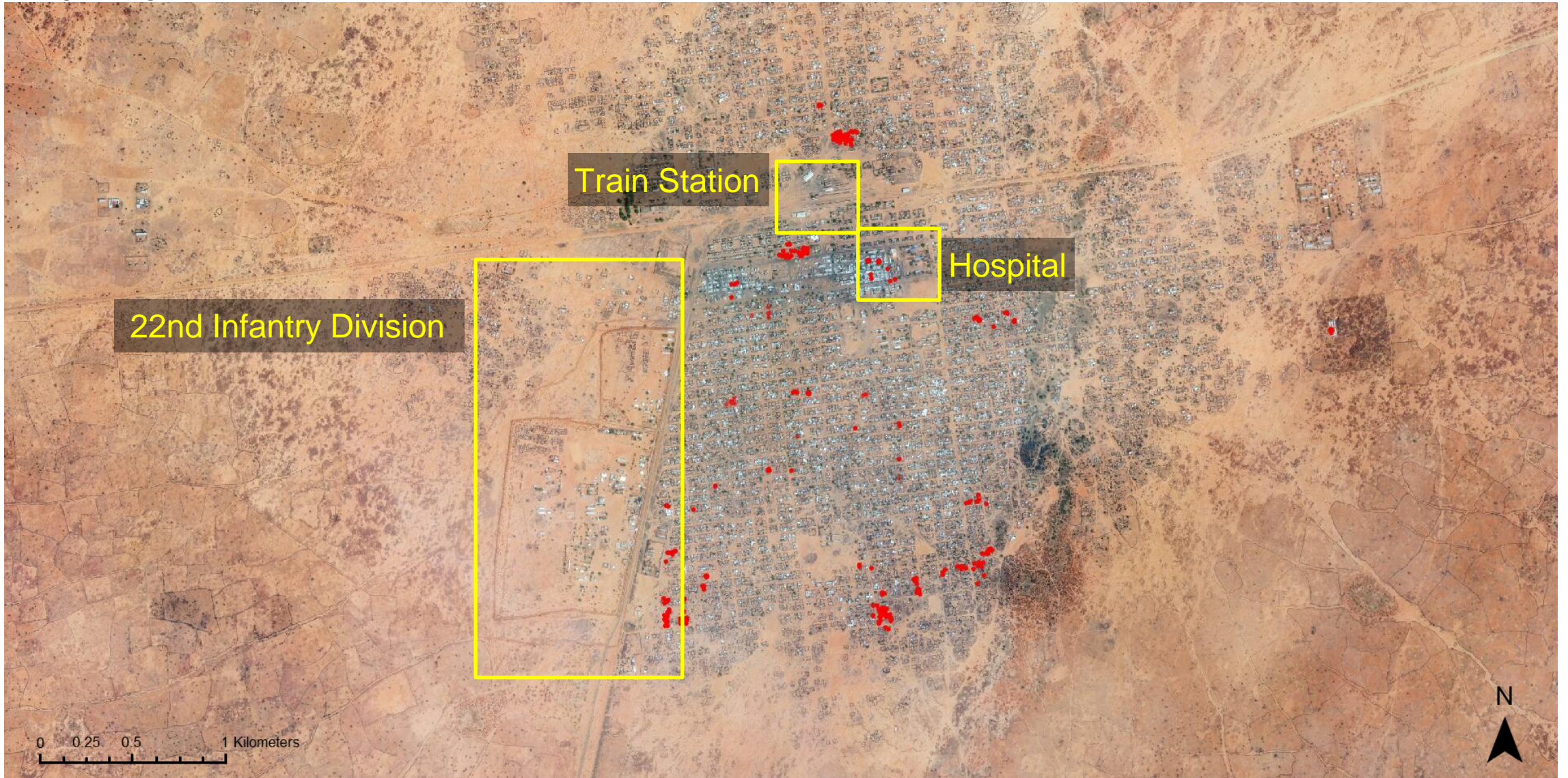
- On January 22, the RSF attacked the SAF-controlled 22nd Infantry Division headquarters. The SAF military headquarters in West Kordofan is in Babanusa and represents one of the last locations that the army controls in the region. SAF was able to repel the attack but fighting continued. In the ensuing months, neither side gained an outright victory, but the fighting had significant humanitarian consequences.
- The Conflict Observatory identified with high confidence at least 253 destroyed structures across Babanusa since January 22.
- The extensive damage to civilian infrastructure across Babanusa calls into question both SAF and RSF commitments to protect civilians and honor international humanitarian laws of armed conflict.



Timeline of Key Events

- 22 January 2024—The RSF launched an attack on the SAF 22nd Infantry Division headquarters. SAF repelled the attack, but clashes continued with neither side gaining a military advantage.¹
- 28 January – The native Misseriya administration brokered a two-day ceasefire to allow civilians trapped in Babanusa to leave. Around 45,000 people fled the city.²
- 12 February – Civilians who fled Babanusa reportedly faced looting and beatings from armed groups. At least three children reportedly died due to dehydration while escaping the city.³
- 9 March – Locals in Babanusa claimed that the SAF airstrikes have killed Sudanese and destroyed property. RSF members looted the surrounding areas. Doctors claimed that there is a high death rate among newborn children in the city.⁴
- 13 March – Officials warn of a looming famine in Babanusa due to clashes between SAF and RSF.⁵
- 4 April – The RSF is accused of looting, killing, and arresting civilians who remain in Babanusa.⁶
- 13 April – At least 100 children in the Babanusa area died because of fever, famine, and lack of medical care, according to doctors.⁷
- 25 April – At least 68,140 people were reported displaced from Babanusa since the conflict began in January.⁸
- 6 May – Survivors of the Babanusa fighting say that the conflict has led to the destruction of houses, water sources, schools, and transportation facilities.⁹

Destroyed Structures in Babanusa Between 12/29 and 3/26, highlighted in red



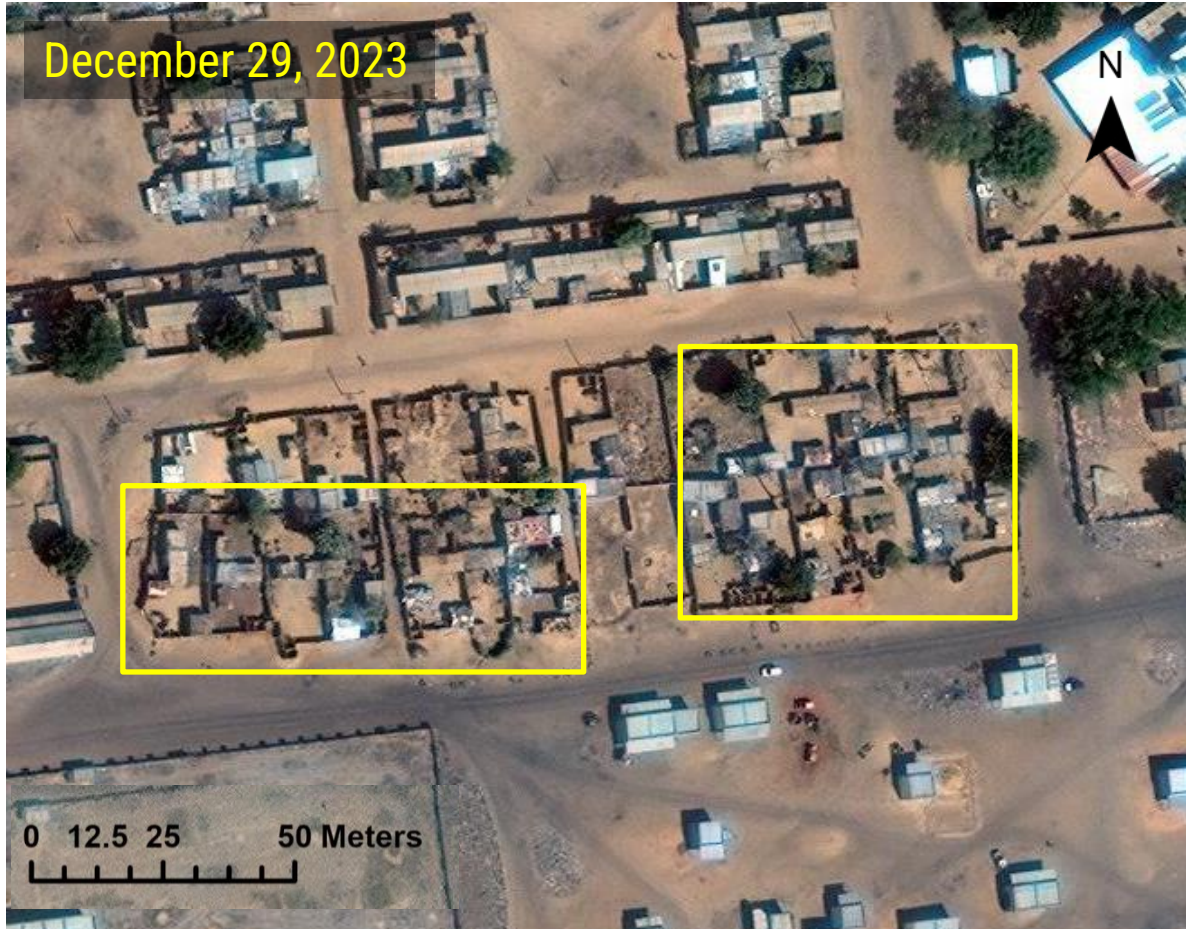
Destroyed Structures in Babanusa

The Conflict Observatory identified at least 253 buildings destroyed based on geospatial imagery before and after the violence.

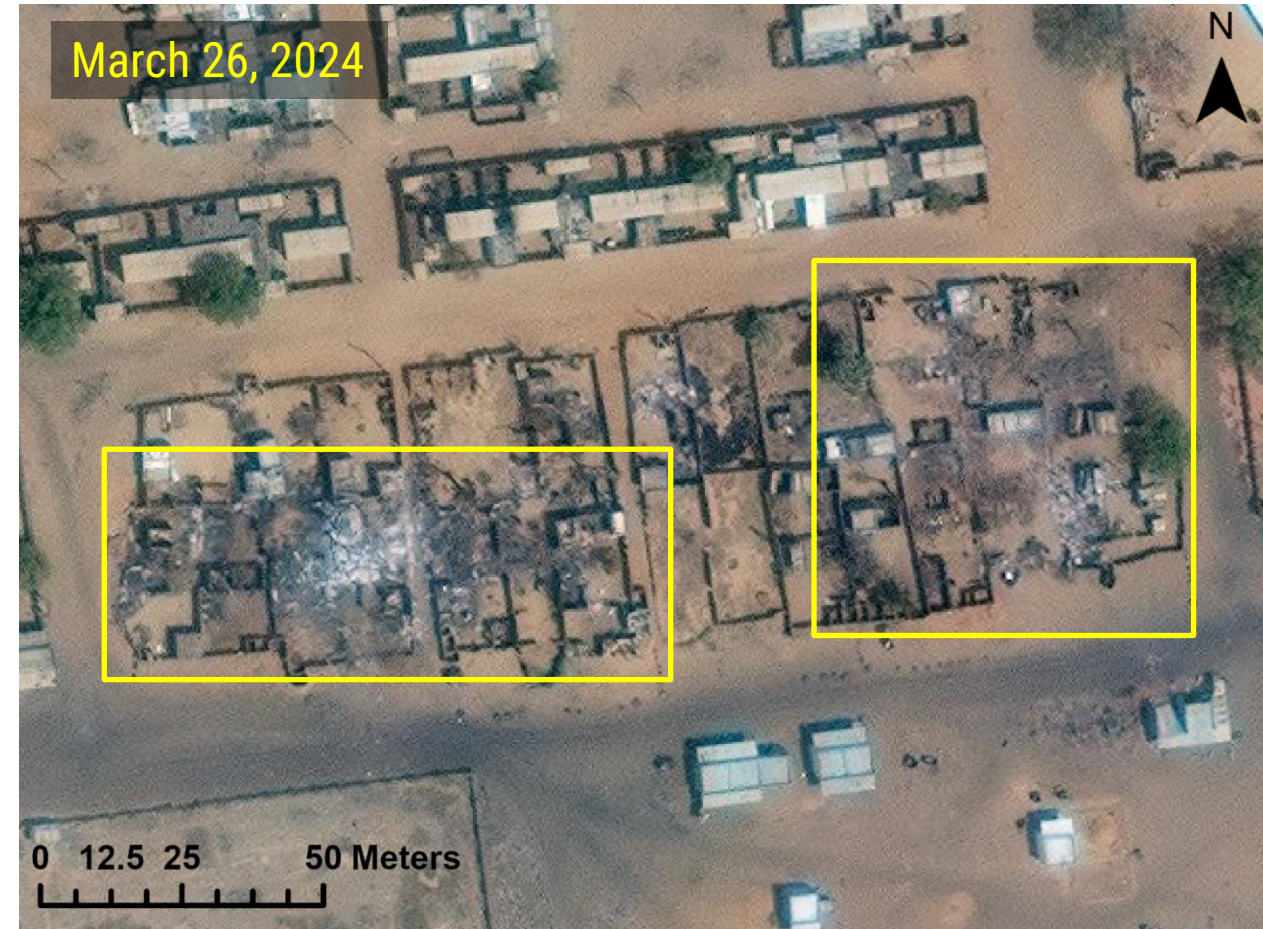
- The largest category of destruction observed is burned and destroyed buildings, which is consistent with accusations of RSF activity in Babanusa. Examples of this destruction can be seen in slide 8.
- Another subset of destruction appears to be buildings that were damaged in fighting between the RSF and SAF. Destruction in the southwest of Babanusa, near the SAF 22nd Infantry Division, is an example of this fighting.
- A final subset of observed destruction in Babanusa is SAF barrel bombs. Examples of civilian destruction observed appear in slide 9. It likely shows bombing of what appears to be a market in Babanusa.
- All the destroyed structures identified had no apparent military use and appeared to be homes, shops, or hospitals.
- The dramatic damage to civilian infrastructure across Babanusa calls into question both SAF and RSF commitments to protect civilians and adhere to laws of armed conflict.
- Comparing images from before the conflict to present day reveals a near total lack of civilian presence in Babanusa because of fighting.

Damage South of Train Station

11°19'52.4"N 27°48'32.9"E



29 December 2023 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

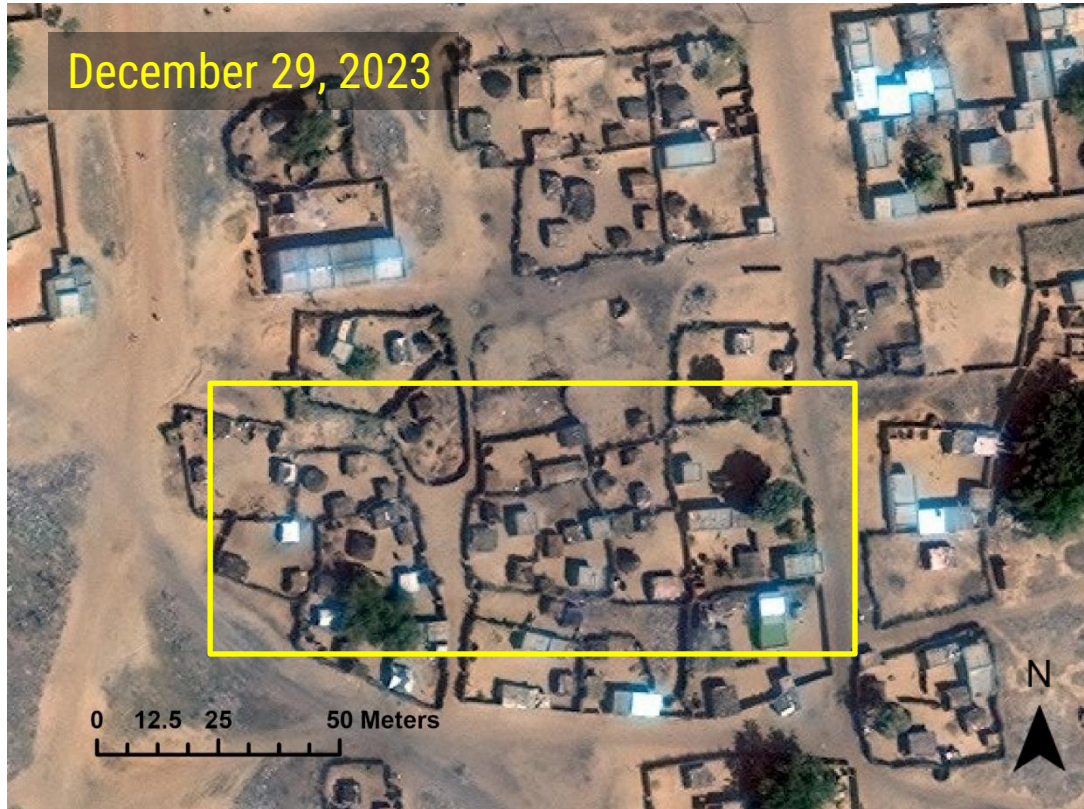


26 March 2024 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

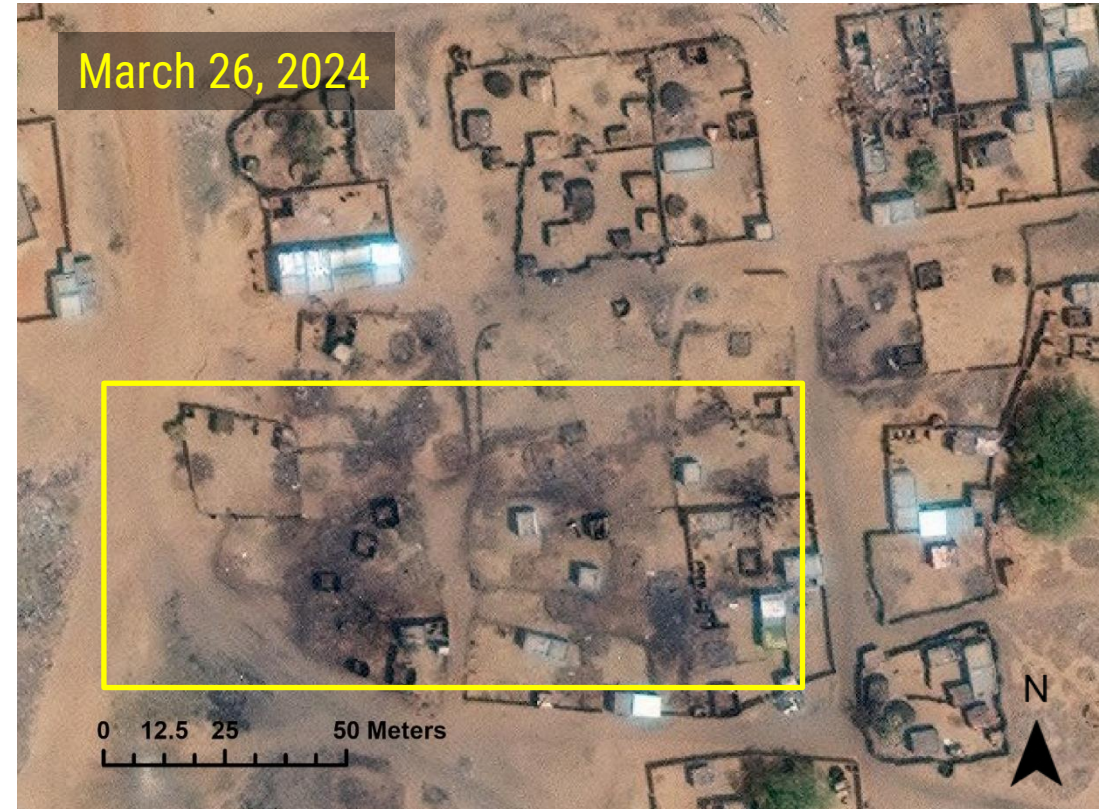
Imagery above depicts approximately 27 structures destroyed between December and March, with most of the structures assessed to be residential.

Damage North of Train Station

11°20'14.8"N 27°48'33.1"E



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The imagery comparison above depicts approximately 38 structures destroyed – potentially from a fire – between December and March, with most of the structures assessed to be residential.

Apparent Bombing in Babanusa

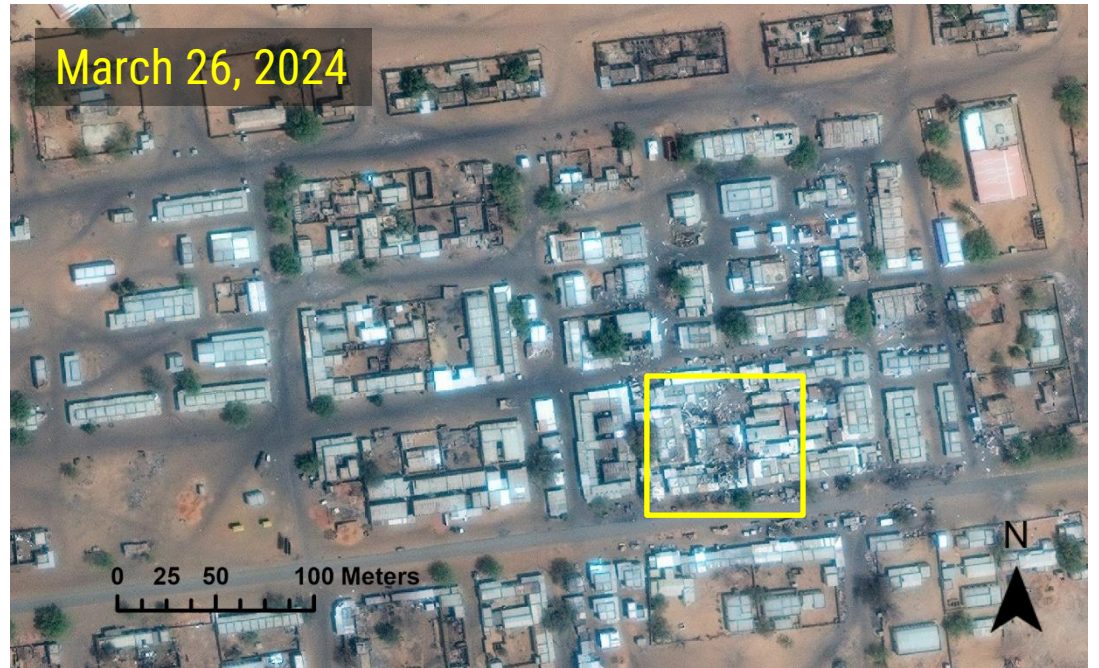
11°19'47.4"N 27°48'39.6"E

Before – December 29, 2023



29 December 2023 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

After – March 26, 2024

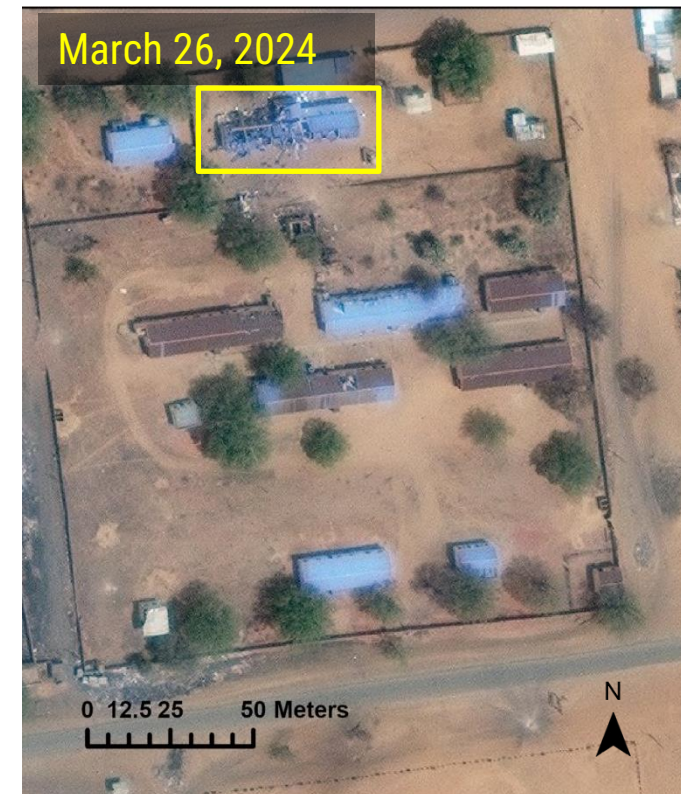


26 March 2024 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

The imagery comparison above depicts destruction, potentially bombing of a market, between December and March.

Damage to Babanusa Civil Hospital

11°19'50.4"N 27°48'47.9"E



29 December 2023 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

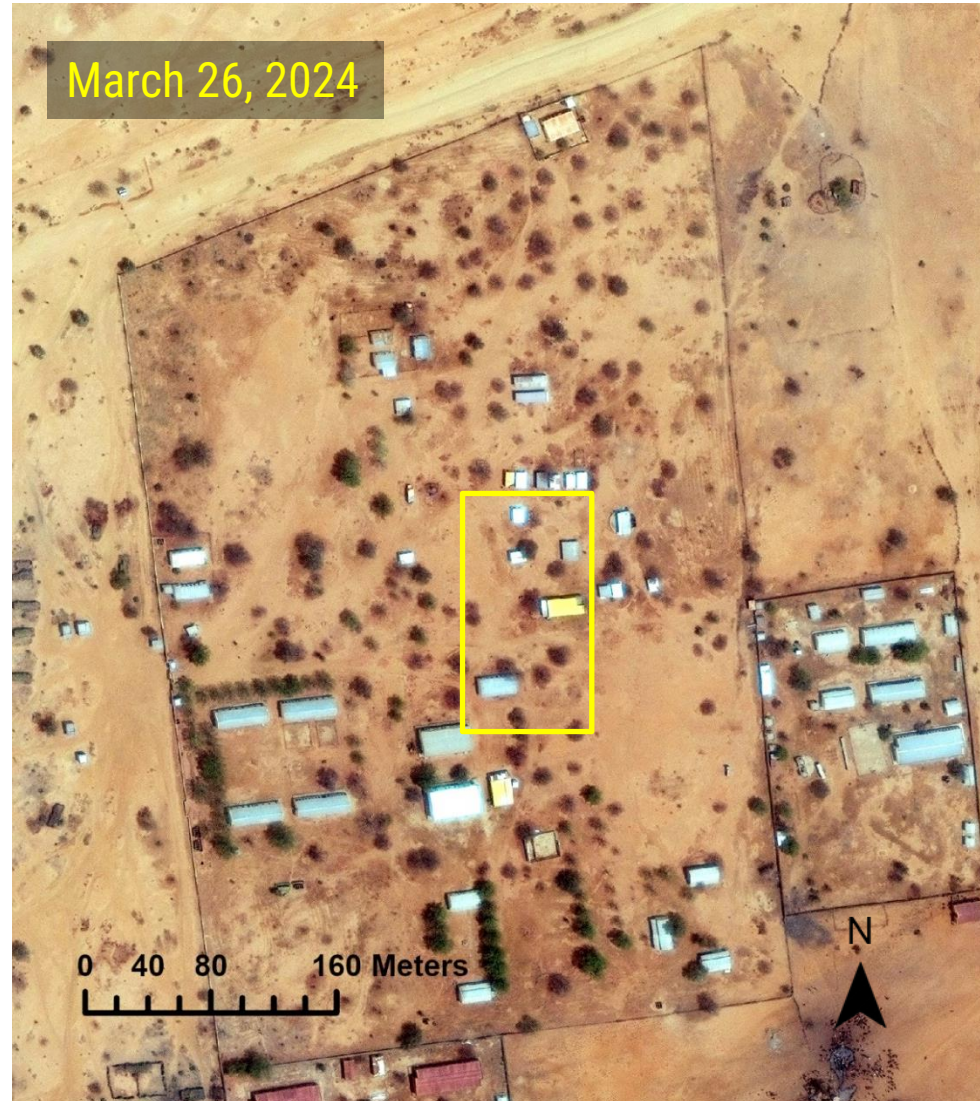
21 February 2024 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

26 March 2024 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

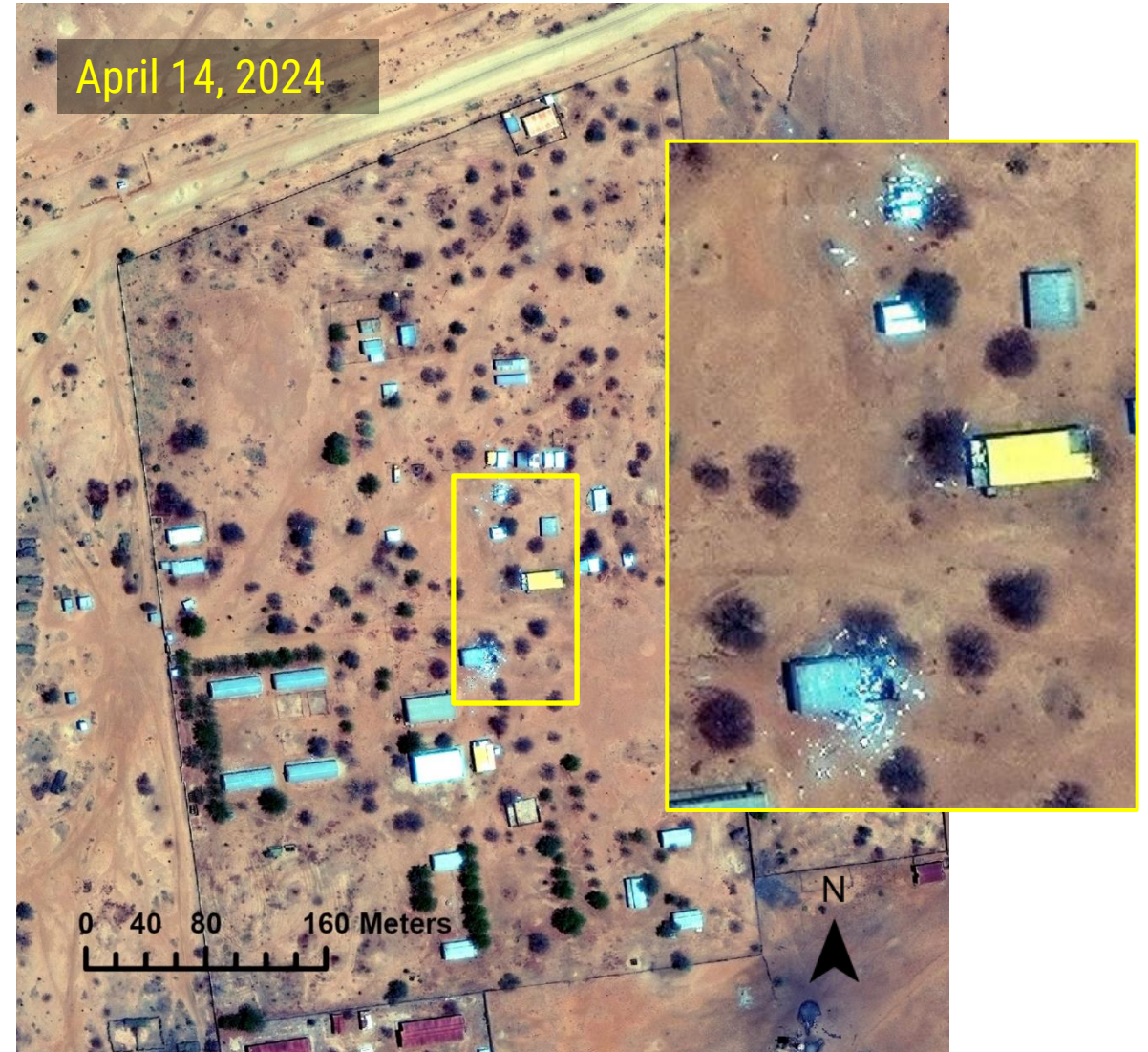
The yellow box highlights the building clearly damaged, likely from an airstrike or bombing, between December and March.

Damage to Babanusa College – highlighted with yellow box

11°20'8.04"N 27°50'0.8"E



26 March 2024 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus



14 April 2024 | © 2024 Maxar, USG Plus

Sources

1. <https://sudanwarmonitor.com/p/rsf-threaten-babanusa-sla-reinforce>
2. <https://sudanwarmonitor.com/p/rsf-threaten-babanusa-sla-reinforce>
3. <https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/1687749-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83-%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%86>
4. <https://acleddata.com/2024/02/16/sudan-situation-update-february-2024-sudan-the-saf-breaks-the-siege/>
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6. <https://www.altaghyeer.info/ar/2024/02/12/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9/>
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9. <https://sudanwarmonitor.com/p/babanusa-artillery-battle?r=3pt4kb>
10. [Sudan Situation Update: February 2024 | Sudan: The SAF Breaks the Siege \(acleddata.com\)](#)

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