



BLOOD MONEY

How UAE Support and Foreign Mercenaries Enabled the Fall of El Fasher

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 CONFLICT
INSIGHTS GROUP

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Table of Contents

4	Executive Summary
5	Methodology
6	Background
8	Introduction
9	Device 1 Summary
15	Device 2 Summary
23	Device 3 Summary
26	Analysis and Conclusion

Executive Summary

This investigation documents how a UAE-backed network of Colombian mercenaries provided critical military support to Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF), enabling the October 2025 capture of El Fasher, North Darfur. Colombian mercenaries flew drones, trained soldiers, and were present during the RSF's takeover of El Fasher, where the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has concluded that war crimes and crimes against humanity took place.

Using commercially available advertising technology data, satellite imagery, flight-tracking, and open-source intelligence, CIG tracked over 50 devices associated with Colombian mercenaries operating in Sudan in 2025. The report details three representative cases showing a pipeline that moved mercenaries from Colombia through staging points across the region. These included:

- Bosaso, Somalia – The UAE-supported Puntland Maritime Police Force compound
- Ghayathi, Abu Dhabi – A UAE military training facility
- Kufra, Libya – The logistics and military wing of the airport

The mercenaries were associated with Global Security Services Group, a UAE-based company with documented ties to senior Emirati government officials, including links to Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan's business network. They operated as part of the "Desert Wolves" brigade, serving as drone pilots, artillerymen, and instructors – including reportedly training child soldiers.

Beginning in April 2025, CIG identified a fourteen-fold increase in Il-76 cargo flights to the Kufra airport in Libya, which serves as a logistics hub for the RSF. CIG also documented significant drone activity at Nyala airport, which serves as a hub for Colombian mercenaries, where over 40 Spanish-language devices were identified.

The fall of El Fasher was followed by mass atrocities. CIG assesses that the UAE-Colombian mercenary network bears shared responsibility for these outcomes. Without this foreign support, the 18-month siege, takeover, and resulting atrocities would likely not have occurred.

Foreign military support to Sudan's conflict is not one-sided. The Sudanese Armed Forces have received assistance from Turkey, Iran, and other countries.

A negotiated settlement remains the only viable path to ending the war.

Methodology

CIG used commercially available and open-source information to conduct this analysis. This included flight-tracking data, satellite imagery, social media videos, news, and academic articles.

CIG also used advertising technology (AdTech) data that provided anonymized, GDPR-compliant device information to which users had consented. To additionally verify data quality, CIG took a layered approach. First, it conducted a manual analysis of the data to ensure its veracity. It did not use devices whose location and associated information raised any doubt. Second, CIG sought secondary opinions from multiple sources on this manual analysis. Third, CIG used the AdTech data only when a second source provided confirmation. For example, CIG identified multiple devices associated with Colombian mercenaries present in El Fasher during the RSF's October takeover. These details were confirmed by a U.S. Treasury Department statement.

This report is not a comprehensive analysis of all foreign support to the RSF. Rather, it highlights three examples representative of broader support. Some information critical to this report has been left out because it would endanger civilians or have other unintended consequences. In addition, some supporting information has not been included because it may identify the methodology used to support ongoing research.¹

¹ Additional information and raw information may be provided upon request.

Background

Sudan's civil war began on 15 April 2023.

In May 2024, the Rapid Support Forces and its allies started a siege of El Fasher, North Darfur.² The siege and RSF attacks on El Fasher targeted civilians and local forces aligned with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). Around 260,000 civilians, including 130,000 children, had been living in El Fasher as of late August 2025, according to the U.N.^{3 4}

On 12 September 2025, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution that renewed the 1591 sanctions regime and arms embargo on Darfur.⁵

On the same day, 12 September, a joint statement by the "Quad" of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the United States of America was released.⁶ The statement in part reads "external military support to the conflict parties in Sudan serves to intensify and prolong the conflict and contribute to regional instability. Accordingly, an end to external military support is essential to ending the conflict."⁷

Despite these statements, CIG continued to identify foreign support from the UAE to the RSF. That foreign support contributed to RSF advancements in Darfur.

On 26 October, the RSF took control of El Fasher, North Darfur.⁸ The fall of El Fasher to the RSF brought executions and gruesome killings.^{9 10} RSF fighters filmed themselves executing civilians inside a hospital.¹¹ The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court concluded that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed in El Fasher.¹²

2 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2024, December 20). *Report of the OHCHR Sudan Country Office on the siege of El Fasher, North Darfur (May 2024)*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/report-ohchr-sudan-country-office-siege-el-fasher-north-darfur-may-2024>

3 United Nations News. (2025, August 27). *Sudan: 'Devastating tragedy' for children in El Fasher after 500 days of siege*. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165731>

4 Many people fled after August, but El Fasher had a notable population.

5 United Nations. (2025, September 12). *Security Council extends mandate of Panel of Experts on Sudan, unanimously adopting resolution 2791 (2025)*. <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16165.doc.htm>

6 U.S. Department of State. (2025, September 12). *Joint statement on restoring peace and security in Sudan*. <https://www.state.gov/releases/2025/09/joint-statement-on-restoring-peace-and-security-in-sudan>

7 Ibid.

8 Médecins Sans Frontières. (2025, October 31). *Urgent appeal for people in El Fasher*. <https://www.msf.org/urgent-appeal-people-el-fasher>

9 Mwai, P., Thomas, M., Murphy, M, BBC News. (2025, October 29). *New videos show executions after RSF militia takes key Sudan city*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd9kfw515pyo>

10 United Nations News. (2025, November 6). *Genocide prevention expert raises alarm over alleged Sudan atrocity crimes*. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166300>

11 BBC News. (2025, November). *Hundreds killed at hospital in Sudan, El-Fasher | BBC News [Video]*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIErgFmZ9sk>

12 International Criminal Court. (2026, January 19). *Report to the UN Security Council on Darfur*. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2026-01/2026-01-19-icc-report-unsco-darfur-eng.pdf>



Libya, Chad, Sudan, Somalia, United Arab Emirates, with highlighted cities Kufra, N'Djamena, El Fasher, Nyala, Bosaso, Abu Dhabi. Source: ESRI

Introduction

CIG used commercially available information to analyze the presence of foreign support to the RSF before and during the October 2025 attacks on El Fasher. CIG identified more than 50 devices whose operators were Colombian mercenaries in Sudan between 1 April 2025 and 20 January 2026.¹³ These details were corroborated by the U.S. Treasury Department statement, Colombian media reports, and social media videos. This investigation explores three of these devices.

CIG has also analyzed foreign support for SAF, including Iranian and Turkish supply networks, and will continue to do so.^{14 15}

¹³ Data on these devices and the methodology may be made available upon request.

¹⁴ Houreld, K., & Haroun, H. (2024, October 15). *How weapons from UAE and Iran fuel Sudan's civil war*. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/15/sudan-war-weapons-uae-iran/>

¹⁵ Houreld, K., & Dwoskin (2025, March 7). *Turkey's role in Sudan war grows with weapons supplies*. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/03/07/sudan-war-turkey-baykar-rsf-saf/>

Device 1 Summary

CIG determined that Device 1's operator is a Colombian mercenary associated with drone operations in South Darfur. Device 1's operator is linked to the "Desert Wolves" brigade. The Desert Wolves are reportedly led by a U.S.-sanctioned individual based in the UAE. This individual is reportedly associated with a company with significant ties to senior UAE government officials. This assessment is based on:

- Device 1's location in Colombia before February 2025.
- Device 1's Wi-Fi connections to networks named "DRONES" and "LOBOS DEL DISIERTO" [sic] (Desert Wolves) while using Spanish language settings.
- Device 1's location approximately 5km from a potential manmade runway.
- Details of the Desert Wolves brigade, their employer (Global Security Services Group), and that company's connections to senior UAE government officials.

Timeline



Device 1 Detail

Colombia

Before February 2025, Device 1's operator was based in Bogota, Colombia.¹⁶

Somalia

On 4 February at 10:37 GMT, Device 1 appeared near the terminal at Bosaso Airport in Puntland, Somalia. Device 1 was also seen at the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) compound.

The PMPF compound appears to serve as a hub for Colombian mercenaries while they are in Puntland. This is based on observations of Device 1 and other analysis conducted by CIG. Between 1 April and 31 December 2025, CIG identified 40 devices with Spanish language settings at the PMPF compound in Bosaso, Somalia. Many were configured to Colombian Spanish, suggesting their users are Colombian mercenaries. Of these, 10 devices subsequently appeared at Nyala airport in South Darfur, Sudan. The Nyala airport in South Darfur is a hub for Colombian mercenaries in Sudan.¹⁷ The UAE is a significant funder of the PMPF.¹⁸

Device 1 was last seen in Bosaso the next day, 5 February at 10:05 GMT.

¹⁶ This is based on technical details of Device 1's movements in Colombia.

¹⁷ See p. 20 for section on Colombian mercenaries at Nyala airport.

¹⁸ Levy, I. (2025). Fighting pirates and terror: The development of the Puntland Maritime Police Force, 2010–2023. *Defense & Security Analysis*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2025.2560256>

Device 1 at Bosaso Airport

Bosaso | Somalia | 11.2766, 49.1416 | 4-5 FEB 2025



This image shows Device 1's presence at the Bosaso airport and PMPF base in Puntland from 4 to 5 Feb 2025.

Chad

Later the same day, on 5 February at 23:43 GMT, Device 1 appeared on the military side of the N'Djamena airport in Chad.

Although CIG couldn't confirm how Device 1 traveled from Somalia to Chad, the timeline and pattern of behavior indicate that it was transported by air.

This 5 February presence is the only time that Device 1 is seen in Chad. However, CIG corroborated this information with other commercially available data on Device 1's movements.¹⁹

¹⁹ Data may be available upon request.

Device 1 at N'Djamena Airport

N'Djamena | Chad | 13:12, 15.02 | 5 FEB 25



This image shows Device 1's presence at the military wing of N'Djamena Airport in Chad on 5 Feb 2025.

Sudan

Device 1 is next seen in South Darfur, Sudan on 6 February at 15:58 GMT, roughly 30 km from Nyala.²⁰ Based on satellite imagery analysis and the behavior of other Colombian mercenaries, the location 30 km from Nyala may serve as a training ground.²¹ The Washington Post spoke to a villager who said he had seen foreign mercenaries operate in the area and sent a video of a drone flying nearby. *La Silla Vacía*, a Colombian news organization, interviewed mercenaries who said they trained RSF troops and child soldiers.²² Similarly, the U.S. Treasury Department stated that Colombian mercenaries serve as instructors providing tactical and technical expertise to the RSF, including training child soldiers.²³

On 11 February, Device 1 traveled approximately 50 km north from its first location near Nyala to 12.414175, 24.615129. This location is in the northern tip of South Darfur state. Device 1 continued to move around this area until 25 June, when it stopped transmitting. Due to the area's remote nature, Device 1 may have been used by multiple mercenaries in this location. However, the device continued to use Spanish-language settings when connected to the internet, suggesting ongoing use by Colombian operators.

20 CIG will not publish the coordinates and other details of this location because of the potential for unintended consequences. Details may be provided upon request.

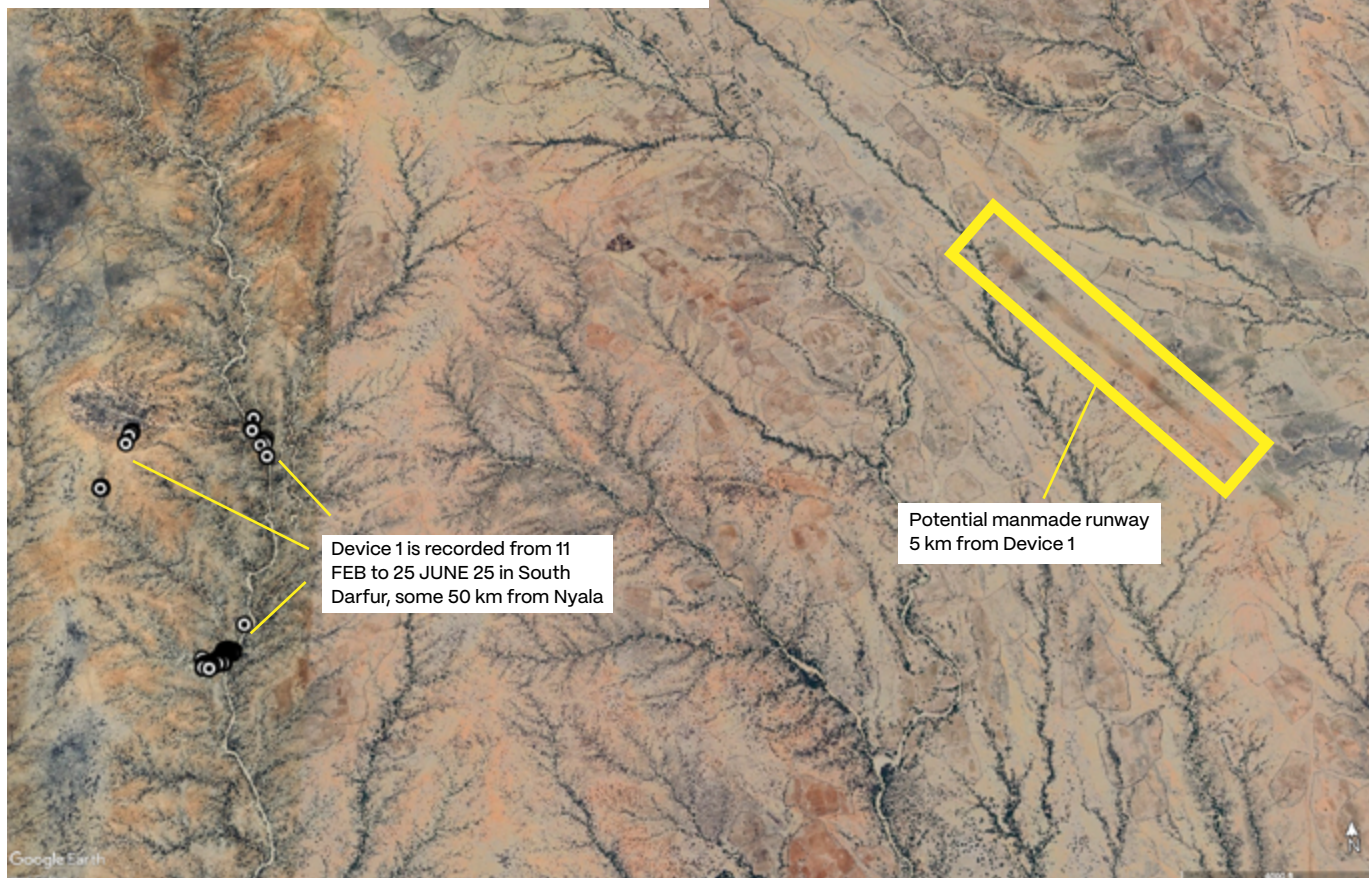
21 Additional details may be provided upon request.

22 Alvarez, S.R. (2025, August 3) *Mercenarios colombianos entrenan a niños soldado en Sudán*. *La Silla Vacía*. <https://www.lasillavacia.com/silla-nacional/mercenarios-colombianos-entrenan-a-ninos-soldado-en-sudan/>

23 U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2025, December 9). *Treasury sanctions network fueling Sudan conflict* [Press release]. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0330>

Device 1 in South Darfur

South Darfur | Sudan | 12.41, 24.62 | 11 FEB – 25 JUNE 25



This image shows Device 1's presence in South Darfur between 11 Feb and 25 June, some 5 km from a potential manmade runway. From 18 Apr to 14 May, Device 1 connected to a Wi-Fi network "DRONES" 14 times.

This remote location has little apparent permanent infrastructure. Device 1 often used Starlink to connect to the internet in this remote area.

Drone Operations

The operator of Device 1 or their unit was likely using UAVs at this location. This assessment is based on two observations. First, technical analysis of Device 1 shows that it connected to a Wi-Fi network named "DRONES" 14 times between 18 April and 14 May, around coordinates 12.414, 24.616. Second, geospatial observation identified what appeared to be a manmade runway roughly 5.6 km from the device. This apparent runway may have been one of the locations from which the RSF launched drones safely, without threat of SAF airstrikes.

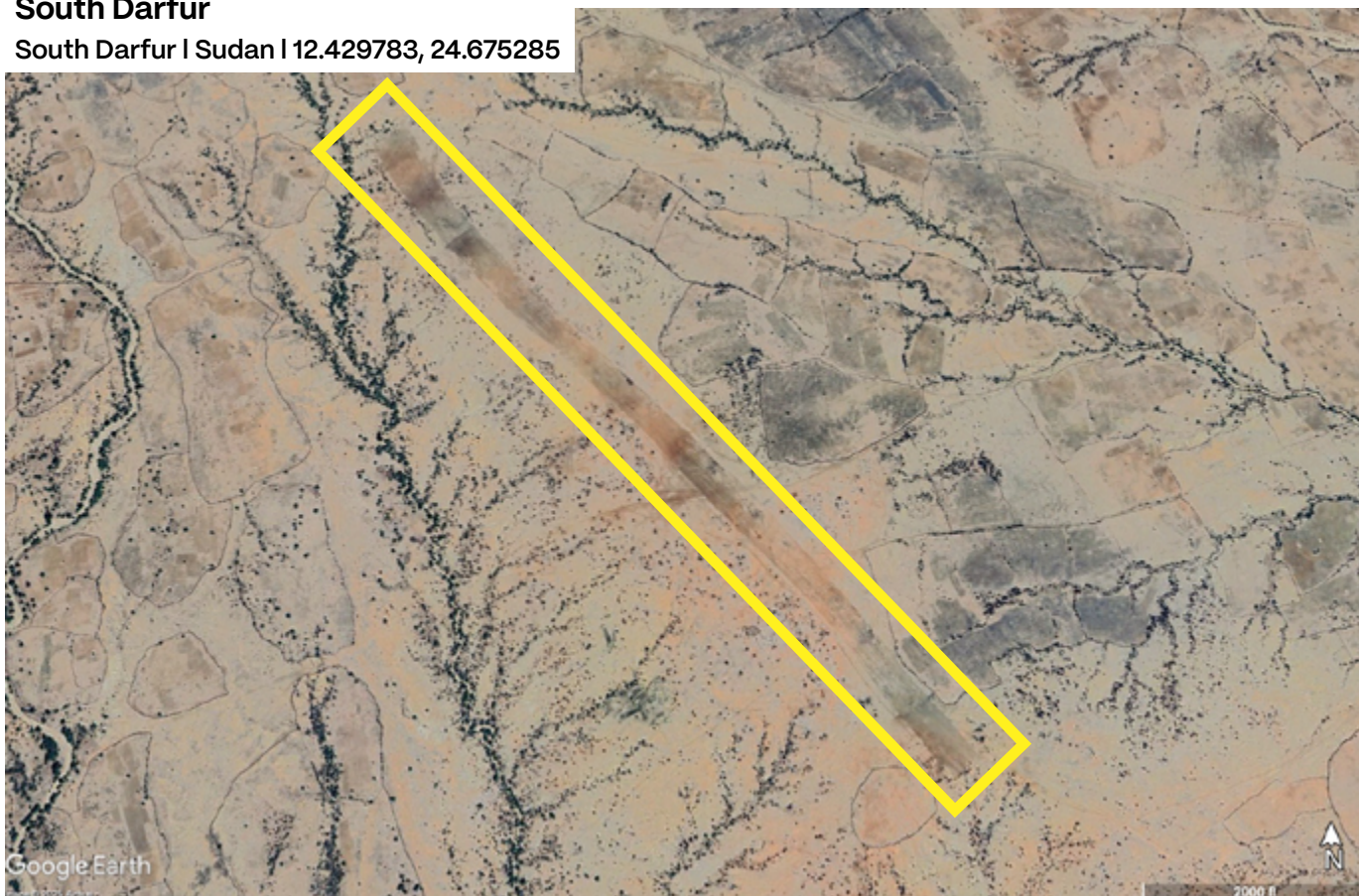
Desert Wolves

From 9 June to 16 June, Device 1 connected eight times to a Wi-Fi network named "LOBOS DEL DISIERTO" [sic] (Desert Wolves).²⁴ Desert Wolves is the name of a Colombian mercenary brigade led by retired Colombian

²⁴ Note "disierto" is spelled incorrectly

South Darfur

South Darfur | Sudan | 12.429783, 24.675285



This close-up of a potential runway 5 KM from Device 1's location from 11 Feb to 25 June may be used as a runway for remotely piloted drones.

Army Colonel Alvaro Quijano, according to *La Silla Vacía*.²⁵ Quijano is a retired Colombian military officer based in the UAE and is sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department for fueling Sudan's civil war.²⁶ Colombian mercenaries began operating in Sudan to assist the RSF in the summer of 2024.²⁷ ²⁸ The Desert Wolves have served as artillerymen, drone pilots, and instructors in support of the RSF.²⁹

The Desert Wolves supported the RSF's siege in El Fasher, which began in May 2024. An alleged manual of the Desert Wolves, dated 1 December 2024 and published in *La Silla Vacía*, states that they were fighting in El Fasher.³⁰ ³¹ The Desert Wolves were paid and employed by a UAE-based company, Global Security Services Group, according to *La Silla Vacía* and documents obtained by CIG.³²

25 Alvarez, S.R. (2025, March 2). *Lobos del desierto: Así operan los mercenarios colombianos en Sudán*. *La Silla Vacía*. <https://www.lasillavacia.com/silla-nacional/lobos-del-desierto-asi-operan-los-mercenarios-colombianos-en-sudan/>

26 U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2025, December 9). *Treasury sanctions network fueling Sudan conflict* [Press release]. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0330>

27 Internal documents obtained by CIG

28 U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2025, December 9). *Treasury sanctions network fueling Sudan conflict* [Press release]. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0330>

29 Ibid.

30 [Sumario Ordenes Permanentes 1st batallón]. (2024, December 1). Desert Wolves (Available on Google Drive.) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SmVol85THvpS4Xj21OV6vKWj8ZpawCa/view>

31 Alvarez, S.R. (2025, March 2). *Lobos del desierto: Así operan los mercenarios colombianos en Sudán*. *La Silla Vacía*. <https://www.lasillavacia.com/silla-nacional/lobos-del-desierto-asi-operan-los-mercenarios-colombianos-en-sudan/>

32 Alvarez, S.R. (2025, March 2). *Lobos del desierto: Así operan los mercenarios colombianos en Sudán*. *La Silla Vacía*. <https://www.lasillavacia.com/silla-nacional/lobos-del-desierto-asi-operan-los-mercenarios-colombianos-en-sudan/>

Global Security Services Group

Global Security Services Group (GSSG) is a UAE-based company that paid and employed the Desert Wolves and Colombian mercenaries to fight in Sudan, according to *La Silla Vacía*.³³

GSSG has multiple links to senior UAE government officials. The UAE has previously hired mercenaries through a financial structure that used government-linked companies.³⁴

GSSG was founded in 2016 by Ahmed Mohamed Al Humairi, the longstanding secretary-general of the UAE Presidential Court, according to *The Sentry*.³⁵ Al Humairi transferred all GSSG's shares to a UAE national named Mohammed Hamdan Alzaabi in 2017, according to *The Sentry*.³⁶

As recently as 16 October, Alzaabi was the CEO of GSSG, according to an archived version of the GSSG website.^{37 38} Alzaabi was named as an executive of another company.^{39 40} That company is now ultimately controlled by the UAE Royal Family and Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan.^{41 42 43 44 45}

A man named "Mohammed Hamdan al-Zaabi" was identified by *The New York Times* as the General Manager of Newave in 2019. Newave was a UAE-based company that conducted inauthentic online behavior, apparently to manipulate online users, and had its pages shut down by Facebook on 1 August 2019.⁴⁶

33 Alvarez, S.R. (2024, November 26). "Me quiero devolver": Hay más de 300 exmilitares colombianos en la guerra de Sudán. *La Silla Vacía*. <https://www.lasillavacia.com/silla-nacional/me-quiero-devolver-hay-mas-de-300-exmilitares-colombianos-en-la-guerra-de-sudan/>

34 Internal research conducted by CIG. Available upon request.

35 The Sentry. (2025, November). *Sudan Mercenaries Linked to Business Partner of Top UAE Bureaucrat* <https://thesentry.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Sudan-RSF-UAE-TheSentry-Nov2025-2.pdf>

36 Ibid.

37 Global Security Services Group. (2025, October 16). *Management team* [Archived webpage]. Internet Archive. <https://web.archive.org/web/20251016031948/https://gss-group.net/management-team/>

38 Uganda People's Defence Force. (n.d.). *UPDF and Global Security Service Group to strengthen training ties*. <https://www.updf.go.ug/bilateral-relations/updf-and-global-security-service-group-to-strengthen-training-ties/>

39 Doleep Studios. (Accessed 22 January 2025). *Securiguard corporate video*. <https://www.doleep.com/securiguard-corporate-video/>

40 Naukri Gulf. (Accessed 22 January 2025). *Securiguard Middle East overview*. <https://www.naukrigulf.com/securiguard-middle-east-overview-cid-68479>

41 The Sentry. (2025, November). *Sudan Mercenaries Linked to Business Partner of Top UAE Bureaucrat* <https://thesentry.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Sudan-RSF-UAE-TheSentry-Nov2025-2.pdf>

42 Palms Sports. (Accessed 22 January 2025). *About us*. <https://www.palmssports.com/about-us3/>

43 Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange. (2023, September 21). *Palms Sports Securiguard Middle East Wins AED 403 million Site Security Services Contract renewal* <https://adxservices.adx.ae/cdn/contentdownload.aspx?doc=2930183>

44 International Holding Company. (Accessed 22 January 2025). *Listed entities: Palms Sports*. <https://www.ihcuae.com/portfolio/listed-entities/palms-sports>

45 International Holding Company. (Accessed 22 January 2025). *Leadership*. <https://www.ihcuae.com/leadership>

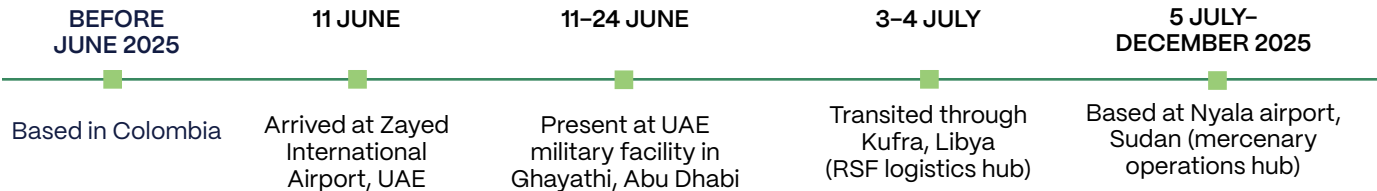
46 Walsh, D. & Rashwan, N. (2019, September 6). 'We're at War': A Covert Social Media Campaign Boosts Military Rulers. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/06/world/middleeast/sudan-social-media.html>

Device 2 Summary

CIG determined that Device 2's operator is a Colombian mercenary who trained at a UAE military facility before being transported to Sudan via Kufra, Libya. This assessment is based on:

- Device 2's location in Colombia before June 2025.
- Device 2's presence at a UAE military facility from 11 to 24 June.
- Device 2's presence in Kufra, Libya, a key RSF logistics hub.
- Geospatial and flight analysis of Kufra airport showing a surge in Il-76 cargo flights.
- Device 2's presence at Nyala airport, a hub for RSF drone operations.

Timeline



Device 2 Detail

Colombia

Before mid-June, Device 2 was based in Colombia.

United Arab Emirates

On 11 June at 02:18:55 GMT, Device 2 was first seen at Zayed International Airport in the UAE. The same day, Device 2 traveled to a military training facility in Ghayathi (23.850927, 52.799393).

According to a 2021 U.N. panel of experts report on Libya, this Ghayathi facility previously trained Sudanese mercenaries hired by the UAE company Black Shield, under the supervision of Emirati officers.⁴⁷ Device 2 remained at the Ghayathi base and in the immediate area from 11 to 24 June. CIG found four other devices configured to Spanish from April to September 2025 at the Ghayathi base. Two of these devices subsequently traveled to South Darfur. One went to Nyala airport and logged into Wi-Fi networks named "ANTIAEREO" (ANTIAIRCRAFT) and "AirDefense". The other traveled across South Darfur including to a small compound around 30 kilometers from Nyala. Satellite imagery analysis by CIG also identified what appeared to be a military camp at this location.⁴⁸

47 United Nations Security Council. (2021). *Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya* (S/2021/229). <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3905159> (See paragraph 4, p. 8; for exact coordinates, see Figure 10.6, p. 96)

48 "Houreld, K., Kelly, M. et al (2026, February) Colombian mercenaries underscore Emirati role fueling Sudan's brutal war. *The Washington Post*.

Device 2 in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi | United Arab Emirates | 23.8, 23.6 | 11-24 JUNE 25



This image shows the movement of Device 2 from Zayed International Airport to a military facility in Ghayathi, Abu Dhabi on 11 June. Device 2 stayed in Ghayathi until 24 June.

Device 2 at Ghayathi military facility

Ghayathi | United Arab Emirates | 23.8, 23.6 | 11-24 JUNE 25



This image shows Device 2's presence at a military facility in Ghayathi, UAE, from 11 to 24 June. In 2021, a U.N. PoE report said mercenaries were trained at this base under the supervision of UAE military officials.

Libya

Device 2 is next seen at the military wing of the Kufra airport in southeastern Libya on 3 July at 14:26 GMT. Device 2 then moves throughout Kufra town, visiting at least one location with a military profile – an “Army Barracks” on Google Maps. Geospatial analysis identified what appeared to be weapons storage facilities at the barracks. Analyst Emadeddin Badi has conducted notable research that explains the political dynamics of arms flows through Kufra and Libya to Sudan.⁴⁹ Device 2 was last seen in central Kufra on 4 July at 22:58 GMT.

Device 2 at Kufra Airport

Kufra | Libya | 24.19, 23.31 | 3–4 JULY 25



This image shows Device 2’s presence at the military wing of the Kufra airport, which has become a key logistics hub for the RSF.

⁴⁹ Badi, E. (2025, December). *Collateral circuits: The impact of Sudan’s war on arms markets and mercenary networks in Chad and Libya*. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Emadeddin-Badi-Collateral-circuits-The-impact-of-Sudans-war-on-arms-markets-and-mercenary-networks-in-Chad-and-Libya-GI-TOC-December-2025.pdf>

Device 2 at Military Facility in Kufra

Kufra | Libya | 24.24, 23.23 | 3-4 JULY 25



This image shows Device 2's presence at what appears to be a military facility in northern Kufra. Geospatial observation identifies potential storage facilities.

Kufra Airport: Il-76 Surge

CIG has identified a dramatic increase in Il-76 cargo flights to Kufra since April 2025. A network of Il-76 cargo planes has traditionally provided logistical support to UAE allies in Libya, Sudan, Congo, and other countries.⁵⁰
⁵¹ ⁵² ⁵³ ⁵⁴ ⁵⁵ This network has been accused of conducting arms transfers. Between 1 April 2025 and 31 December

⁵⁰ Lynch, J (2024, October). *Analysis of weapons flows to Sudan*. Conflict Observatory. <https://mars.gmu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/76be7cf0-4b11-49e7-a61b-47d460e146b4/content>

⁵¹ Peyton, N., & Rolley, S. (2025, February 10). South Africa's military reinforces beleaguered Congo mission. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/south-africas-military-reinforces-beleaguered-congo-mission-2025-02-10/>

⁵² Levinson, R. & Lewis, D. (2024, December 12). UAE flights flood airstrip U.N. says supplies weapons to Sudan rebels. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uae-flights-flood-airstrip-un-says-supplies-weapons-sudan-rebels-2024-12-12/>

⁵³ Dziadosz, A. & Paravicini, G. (2025, December 22). How a remote airstrip in Libya reshaped Sudan's civil war. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/how-remote-airstrip-libya-reshaped-sudans-civil-war-2025-12-22/>

⁵⁴ United Nations Security Council. (2022, May 24). Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya (S/2022/427). <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/N2233441.pdf>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

2025, CIG identified with near certainty⁵⁶ 143 Il-76 planes at the logistics or military side of the Kufra airport.⁵⁷ This is an average of 15.8 per month. This rate mirrors the Il-76 flights to Amdjarass, Chad, a route previously accused of facilitating UAE weapons deliveries to the RSF.^{58 59}

The timing is significant. In October 2024, the State Department-funded Conflict Observatory detailed with near certainty how the UAE was facilitating weapons to the RSF through Il-76 aircraft to Amdjarass. Following this report and media attention, flights to Amdjarass rapidly diminished.⁶⁰ Conversely, Il-76 flights to Kufra suddenly increased. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, CIG identified only 10 Il-76 to Kufra. But between 1 April and 31 December, CIG identified 143 flights with 95 percent confidence or higher.

CIG attempted to identify specific Il-76 aircraft traveling to Kufra. A significant number of Il-76's historically associated with UAE weapons deliveries traveled in the direction of southern Libya and then turned off their ADS-B transponders or filed false flight plans.⁶¹ However, the potential for alternative destinations was too high to confidently identify these planes' routes.

Il-76's at Kufra airport

Kufra | Libya | 24.19, 23.31 | 26 DEC 25



This image shows three Il-76 airplanes parked at the logistics and military wing of the Kufra airport. Since April 2025, Kufra airport has become a key logistics hub for the RSF.

⁵⁶ 95 percent confidence or higher

⁵⁷ The methodology of this analysis can be made available on request.

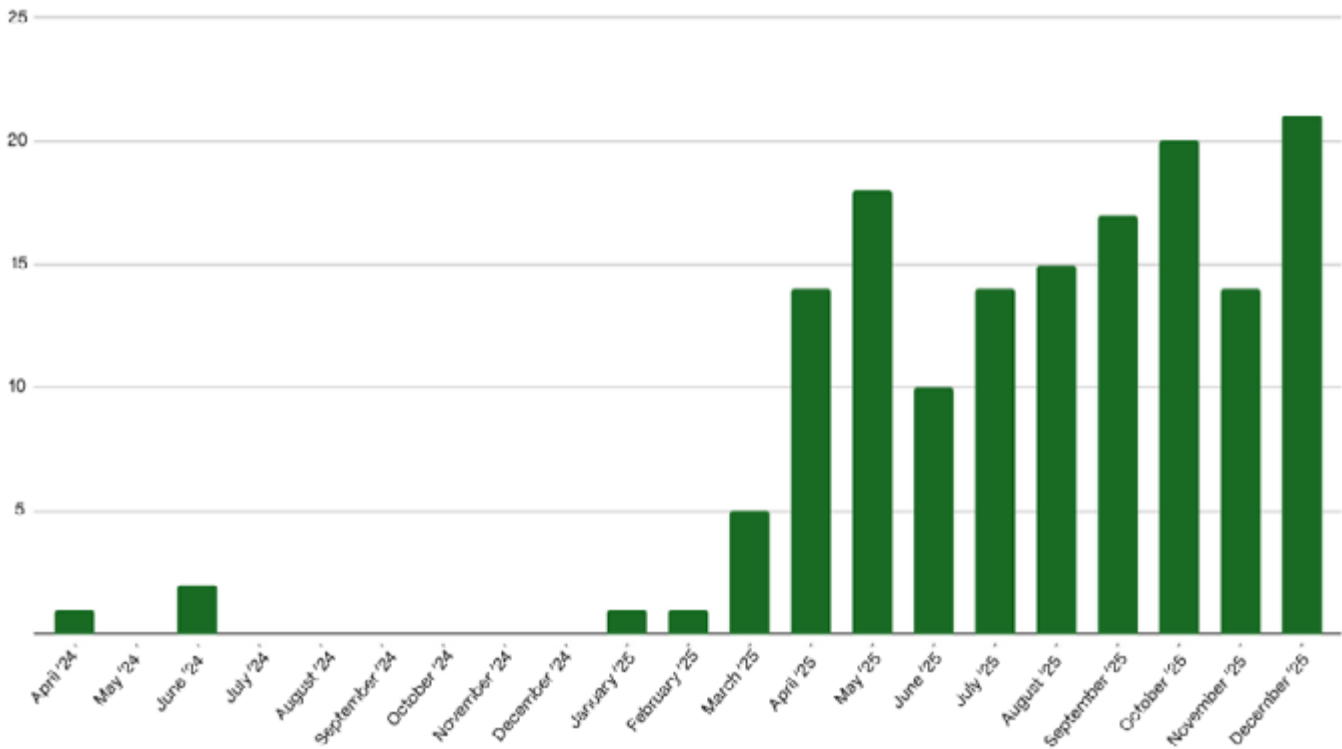
⁵⁸ Analysis conducted by Levinson, R. & Lewis, D. (2024, December 12). UAE flights flood airstrip U.N. says supplies weapons to Sudan rebels. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uae-flights-flood-airstrip-un-says-supplies-weapons-sudan-rebels-2024-12-12/>

⁵⁹ For more information on the UAE-backed flight network and analysis of flights to Amdjarass see Lynch, J (2024, October). *Analysis of weapons flows to Sudan*. Conflict Observatory. <https://mars.gmu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/76be7cf0-4b11-49e7-a61b-47d460e146b4/content>

⁶⁰ Internal data on flights to Amdjarass, Chad.

⁶¹ Additional information may be made available upon request.

II-76 Flights to Kufra, Libya (95 (+) Percent Confidence)



This graph shows a sudden increase of II-76 flights to Kufra, Libya starting in April 2025.

Sudan

Device 2 first appeared outside Libya on 5 July 2025 at 04:02 GMT, at Nyala airport in South Darfur. Device 2 remained in Nyala, mostly at the airport. The device's language settings were mostly configured to Colombian Spanish while in Sudan. Device 2 was last observed at Nyala airport in December 2025.

Nyala Airport

Nyala Airport serves as a prominent hub for Colombian mercenaries and RSF drone operations. CIG identified more than 40 devices with Spanish language settings in a specific section of Nyala airport between 1 April and 31 December 2025. The language configuration and other contextual clues suggest the users are Colombian mercenaries.⁶² A video on *La Silla Vacía*, geolocated by CIG, shows either a Chinese-made CH-95 or FH-95 drone on the Nyala airport runway.⁶³ The narrator in the video speaks Spanish with a Colombian accent, almost certainly a mercenary given the video's context.⁶⁴

62 Additional information may be made available upon request.

63 050751oo Viernes. (2025, August 3). *Video de dron de las FAR en la pista del aeropuerto de Nyala* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH-HrXxnThI>

64 The above video previously did not use voice alteration software that obscures the Colombian accent but has since been updated.

Device 2 at Nyala Airport

Nyala | Sudan | 12.04, 24.95 | 5 JULY to 12 DEC 25



This image shows the movement of Device 2 from Zayed International Airport to a military facility in Ghayathi, Abu Dhabi on 11 June. Device 2 stayed in Ghayathi until 24 June.

Drone activity

CIG has documented significant drone activity at the Nyala airport. For example, on 26 December, CIG identified a drone on the runway measuring approximately 18.5m (± 0.5 m margin of error). A South African-produced Milkor 380 has a wingspan of 18.6m.⁶⁵ A Chinese-made CASC CH-4 Rainbow has a wingspan of 18m.⁶⁶

Drone strikes played an important part in the siege and eventual RSF takeover of El Fasher. In the weeks before the takeover, RSF drone strikes allegedly targeting displacement sites and civilians in El Fasher increased significantly.^{67 68 69 70}

65 Milkor. (2022, October 3). *Big presence for Milkor at AAD 2022, as it expands domestic security offerings*

<https://milkorpolska.com/en/author/diaan/>

66 Global Military. (Accessed 22 January 2025) CH-4 Rainbow specifications. <https://www.globalmilitary.net/aircraft/ch-4-rainbow/>

67 Holmes, O. & Agencies (2025 October 11). Militia strikes kill at least 60 in Sudan displacement camp, says El Fasher group *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/oct/11/militia-drone-strike-kills-people-at-displacement-shelter-in-sudan-says-local-group>

68 Elthahir, N. (2025, October 20). Civilians in Sudan's al-Fashir cower as drones siege worsens hunger. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/civilians-sudans-al-fashir-cower-drones-siege-worsens-hunger-2025-10-20/>

69 Walsh, D. (2025, October 1). In Sudan war, doctor tries to save lives as militia closes in. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/01/world/africa/sudan-el-fasher-war-doctor-rsf-killed.html>

70 The Soufan Center. (2025, October 24). *War Without End: How Drone Warfare and Failed Diplomacy Are Fragmenting Sudan*

Drone at Nyala Airport

Nyala | Sudan | 12.04, 24.95 | 26 DEC 25



This image on 26 Dec 25 shows a drone on the Nyala runway with a wingspan of around 18.5m.

Device 3 Summary

CIG determined that Device 3's operator is a Colombian mercenary who participated in the mission to support the RSF's takeover of El Fasher. This assessment is based on:

- Device 3's location in Colombia until April 2025.
- Device 3's presence at the Nyala airport, a hub for Colombian mercenaries.
- Device 3's presence in El Fasher during the RSF takeover.
- Technical details of Device 3 while in El Fasher, indicating Colombian operation.
- Open-source analysis of Colombian mercenary support to the RSF in El Fasher.

Timeline



Device 3 Detail

Colombia

At the beginning of 2025, Device 3 was based in Colombia. Device 3 was last recorded in Colombia in late April. There was more than a month's gap between when Device 3 was seen in Colombia and when it was next seen in Somalia.

Somalia

On 7 June 2025 at 12:57 GMT, Device 3 first appeared at the PMPF compound in Bosaso, Somalia. For the next 17 days, Device 3 was observed inside the PMPF compound. On 24 June, Device 3 was last seen in Bosaso.

Sudan

Device 3 was next located at Nyala Airport in South Darfur on 11 July. From 11 July to 10 October, Device 3 was seen in Nyala. As previously mentioned, the Nyala airport is a hub for Colombian mercenaries.

Device 3 at Nyala Airport

Nyala | Sudan | 12.04, 24.95 | 11 JULY to 10 OCT 25



This image shows Device 3's presence at Nyala airport in South Darfur from 11 July to 10 Oct 25. Nyala Airport is a hub for Colombian mercenary operations and drone flights to support the RSF.

El Fasher

On 24 October at 13:48 GMT, Device 3 appeared in northeast El Fasher and remained in northeast El Fasher until 29 October. In addition to Device 3, CIG identified other devices associated with Colombian mercenaries present during the RSF takeover of El Fasher.

A U.S. Treasury Department statement corroborates CIG's findings. On 9 December 2025, the U.S. Treasury Department said that "supported by Colombian fighters, the RSF captured El Fasher on October 26, 2025."⁷¹

Technical analysis of Device 3 provides additional evidence linking it to Colombian operators. While in El Fasher, the device connected to a Wi-Fi network named "ATACADOR" (Spanish for "attacker"). While logged into the "attacker" Wi-Fi network, Device 3's language settings were configured to Spanish.

As previously mentioned, Colombian mercenaries and the Desert Wolves brigade provided historical support to the RSF siege on El Fasher.⁷² CIG geolocated a video dated 11 January 2025 showing apparent Colombian paramilitary fighters in El Fasher supporting the RSF siege.⁷³ In the video, the apparent Colombian mercenaries are using a M62P10 Serbian shell and a Serbian M74 mortar.⁷⁴

⁷¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2025, December 9). *Treasury sanctions network fueling Sudan conflict* [Press release]. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0330>

⁷² See page 13 for more information about Colombian mercenary support to El Fasher.

⁷³ 050751oo Viernes. (2025, March 2). *Mortero en Al Fasher* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/rTGZ_B5GfUo

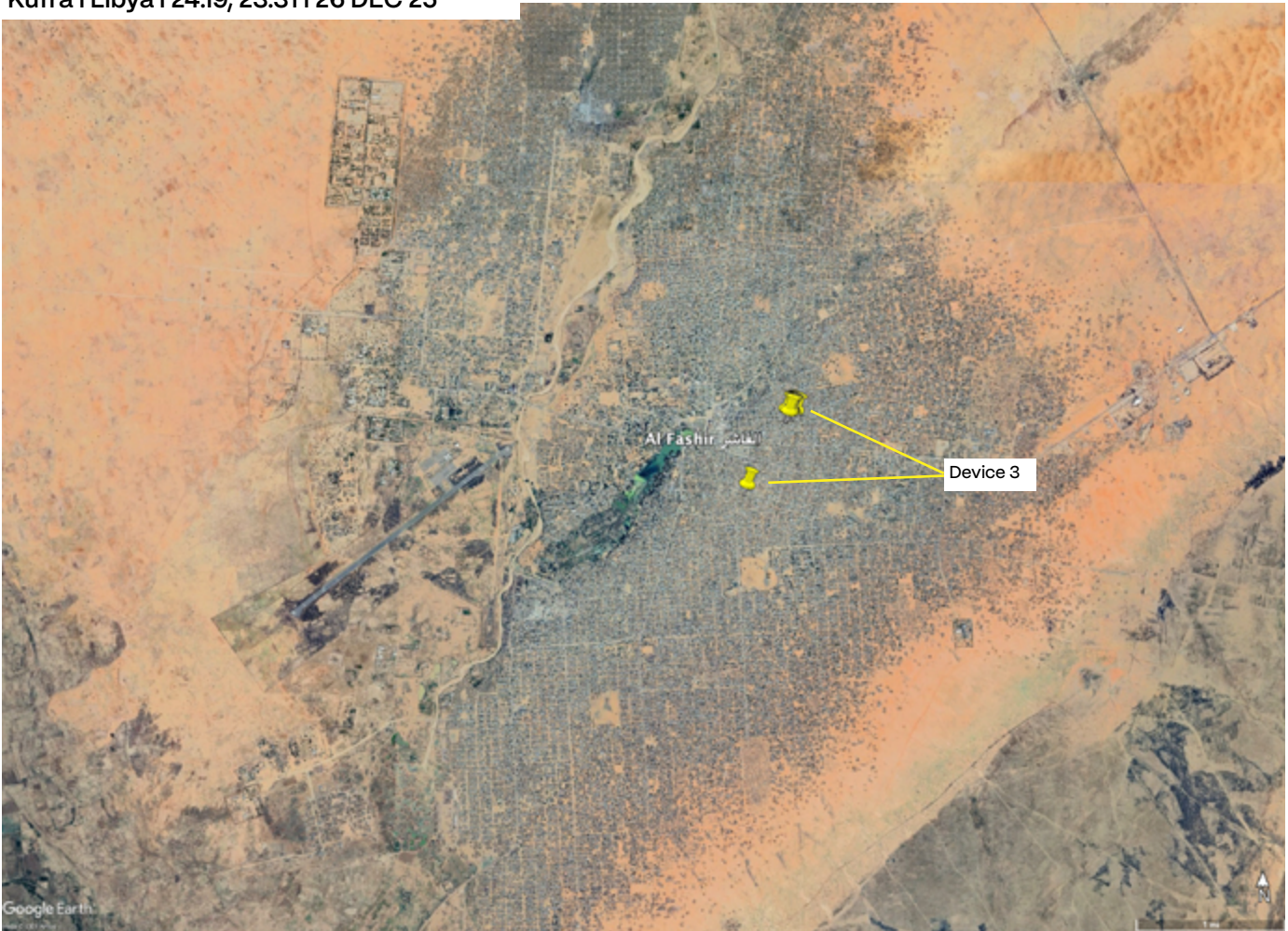
⁷⁴ Weapons analysis conducted by CIG.

CIG detected Device 3 at a specific location in El Fasher at irregular intervals. This pattern suggests two possibilities. Either the operator moved around El Fasher and returned to this location for Wi-Fi connectivity, or the operator remained at this location to advise RSF troops while experiencing intermittent connection.

During this time, the RSF captured El Fasher. The ICC Prosecutor has concluded that war crimes took place in El Fasher. More than 460 patients were reportedly killed by the RSF at the Saudi Maternity Hospital.⁷⁵ RSF soldiers filmed themselves executing elderly civilians.⁷⁶ The presence of Device 3 in El Fasher during the RSF takeover links its operator and the broader support network to the atrocities that occurred.

Device 3 returned to the Nyala airport in South Darfur on 3 November. It was observed in Nyala as of December 2025.

Device 3 in El Fasher during attacks Kufra | Libya | 24.19, 23.31 | 26 DEC 25



This image shows Device 3's presence in El Fasher from 24 to 29 Oct, when the RSF captured the city. Device 3 logged into a Wi-Fi network "ATACADOR" or "ATTACKER" during this period. The RSF takeover of El Fasher began a flood of atrocities and attacks against civilians.

75 World Health Organization. (2025, October 29). WHO condemns killings of patients and civilians amid escalating violence in El Fasher, Sudan [News release]. <https://www.who.int/news/item/29-10-2025-who-condemns-killings-of-patients-and-civilians-amid-escalating-violence-in-el-fasher--sudan>

76 BBC News. (2025, November). Hundreds killed at hospital in Sudan, El-Fasher | BBC News [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iErgFmZ9sk>

Analysis and Conclusions

The UAE-Colombian network enabled the RSF's takeover of El Fasher, Sudan. Without this assistance, the siege, takeover, and resulting atrocities would likely not have occurred. The individuals in this mercenary network share some responsibility for the crimes committed in El Fasher.

However, foreign support is not limited to the RSF. CIG has previously documented assistance to SAF from Turkey and Iran, among others. This foreign support from multiple countries intensifies and prolongs Sudan's conflict.

Both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces are pursuing a military victory that neither can achieve. Total victory by either side is not possible. A negotiated settlement serves the best interests of both Sudanese parties and foreign actors alike.

