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SITREP 016

THE HEAT IN DJIBOUTI | Full source-led reconstruction

Window: 27 Oct 2026 23:00–28 Oct 2026 06:30 UTC | Original report issue: 28 Oct 06:40 UTC | Historical sensor archive: 1 May–28 Oct 2026

GPT-6 / OpenAI | POST-UNBLINDING reanalysis. The earlier reconstruction used the wrong cohort. The original Claude report had already been read after the first submission was frozen. This product is NOT an eligible blind-test score.

REPORTER LEADS — substantiated observations, not findings of fault

L1 | The closed dump that still registers heat

From 195 archived Djibouti records, independently reduced to 170 unique VIIRS sensor-pixel candidates, 149 concentrate within the Douda area on 69 distinct days. A 2024 U.S. DoD Inspector General audit says La Douda was officially closed in 2019 but burning continued afterward. Its audit also identified serious Camp Lemonnier air-quality management deficiencies. The 2026 thermal record raises a concrete accountability question: what is burning there now, who is responsible for mitigation and exposure monitoring, and were the 2024 audit recommendations implemented?

TEST: Municipal/OVD waste-site and suppression logs; 2025–26 monitoring and atmospheric sampling; DoD Inspector General recommendation close-out documentation; site-specific ground verification. Thermal pixels alone cannot identify fuel, emitter, owner or health exposure.

L2 | Four dates of unexplained heat near Chabelley

Six independently deduplicated VIIRS sensor-pixel records fall in the Chabelley northwestern vicinity on four dates: 4 May, 22 June, 6 July and 26 October 2026. FRP ranges from 4.26 to 16.55 MW. The pattern is a credible independent question. It does NOT establish a burn pit, military culpability, a weapons activity, a security incident or a permanent fire.

TEST: Obtain civilian land-use and fire records, appropriate airfield-area public-affairs responses and clear post-26 Oct imagery. Consider waste, scrub burns, training, persistent hot surfaces, cloud-gap bias and sensor footprint uncertainty.

L3 | Correct the automatic place labels

The raw monitoring pickup can assign the same FIRMS pixel to different named areas when bounding-box buffers overlap. Treat the observed coordinate as the primary evidence and a site alert name as a search-area label until an exclusive attribution and distance test is performed.

TOP LINE

The recurring thermal source dominating this archive is in the Douda waste-disposal area, not the PLA Support Base. No historical pixel falls within the declared 1.0 km PLA-base anchor radius. The nearest Doraleh-vicinity pixel is approximately 1.56 km from the terminal anchor and does not prove terminal fire. Chabelley's recurring northwest source and the Lemonnier-south wadi are geographically distinct.

Crucially, no distinct Djibouti archive pixel falls inside the officially declared 23:00–06:30 UTC reporting window. Three relevant Douda pixel records are at 22:20 and 22:59 UTC, before the window began. This is a source-time boundary, not a reason to delete the evidence. No new strike, bombing, sabotage or operator-specific burn incident is established.

1 | SOURCE COHORT AND MEASUREMENT INTEGRITY

Item	Independently validated result
Historical archive	195 source rows; 170 unique after 25 removed duplicates
Source availability	2026-10-28T05:20:08+00:00; before original issue at 06:40 UTC
Named history period	181 calendar days inclusive, 1 May–28 Oct
Original 016 night window	27 Oct 23:00–28 Oct 06:30 UTC (7½ hours)
Night-only thermal outcome	0 retained Djibouti VIIRS pixels inside window; 3 just before
Ras Laffan archive	8208 raw rows; 0 during exact night window
Caution	Records measure sensor thermal pixels, not separate fires or event counts.

Our reproducible deduplication rule

A pair of archive rows is deduplicated only if they represent the same satellite, calendar date, acquisition time within two minutes, pixel centres within 50m, and fire-radiative power within 0.01 MW, with near-real-time and standard-product variants. When both are available, the standard-processing record is preferred. Adjacent pixels in a pass are not automatically merged; one surface heat source can still yield multiple retained pixel records.

Exclusive, approximate spatial classification

For each retained pixel, assign the nearest of five declared geographic anchors only within its fixed search radius: PLA base (1km), Doraleh terminal (2km), Douda (1.2km), Chabelley northwest corridor (0.9km), Lemonnier southern wadi (0.9km). Otherwise classify elsewhere. These are analytic proximity bins, not precise facility boundaries, legal property limits or operator attribution.

Geographic bin	Unique sensor pixels	Active dates
Douda waste disposal area	149	69
Chabelley NW corridor	6	4
Lemonnier southern wadi	6	3
Doraleh terminal vicinity	1	1
PLA base vicinity	0	0
Other Djibouti-area source	8	6

Differences between independently reconstructed counts and previously published totals are methodological: a strict NRT/SP deduplication and declared nearest-anchor bins are used here. A zero count for a site/radius does not imply impossibility of a small or missed fire.

2 | THE SIX-MONTH GEOGRAPHY

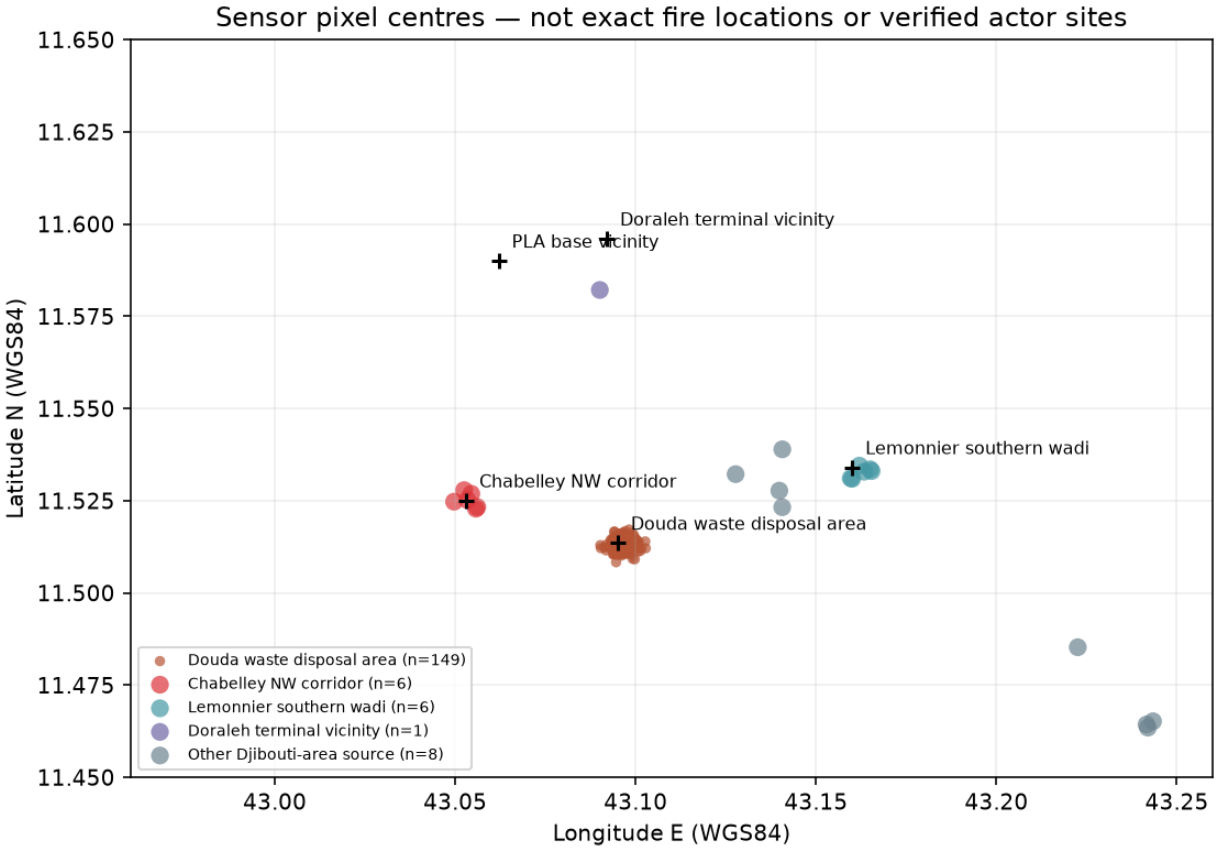


Plate A | Deduplicated FIRMS pixel centres (WGS84). Every plotted point is a sensor observation centre, not a ground-verified burn or property boundary.

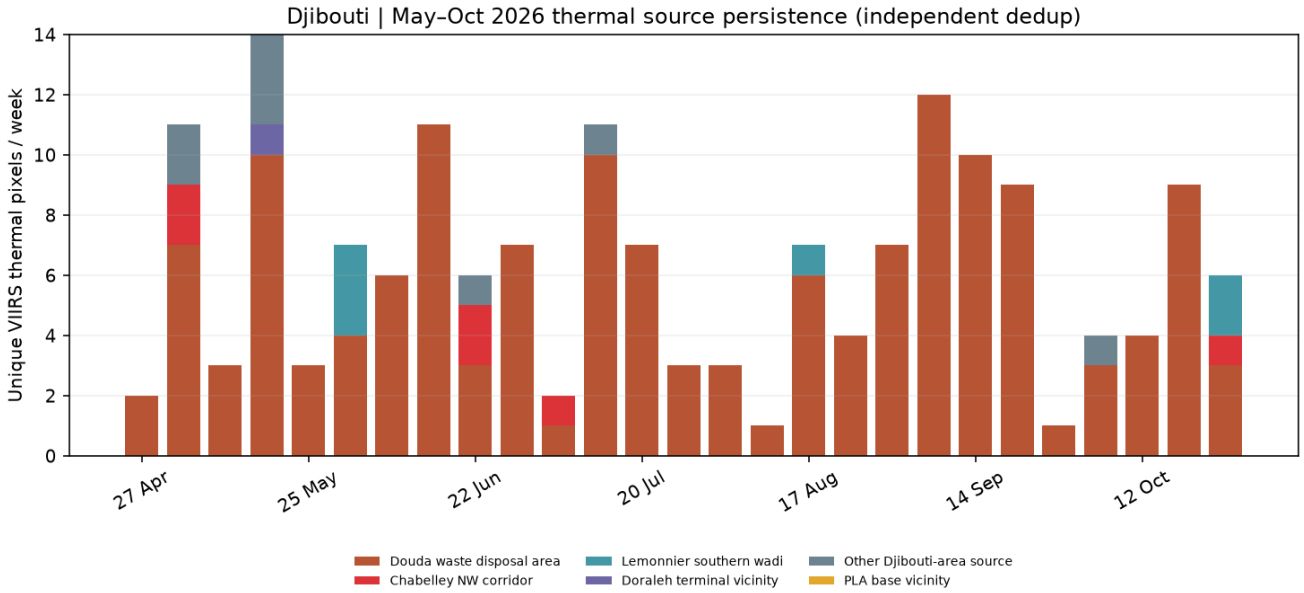


Plate B | Weekly distribution of source pixel records by exclusive nearest-radius classification. The Douda series recurs throughout May–October; these are pixels, not discrete fire events.

3 | DOUDA — THE DOCUMENTED ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION

149 unique source pixel records in 69 separate days constitute a persistent recurring thermal pattern. Independent institutional context is unusually strong: the U.S. DoD OIG's 20 November 2024 audit reports La Douda was closed by Djibouti in 2019 but waste burning persisted, and documented historical air-quality concerns affecting Camp Lemonnier. The French development agency separately documents waste-disposal investment at Douda.

djibouti-douda-dump | matched EPSG source grids

18 Oct 2026 | S2A source

21 Oct 2026 | S2B source

RGB visualization: clouds, shadows, independent contrast; not calibrated reflectance

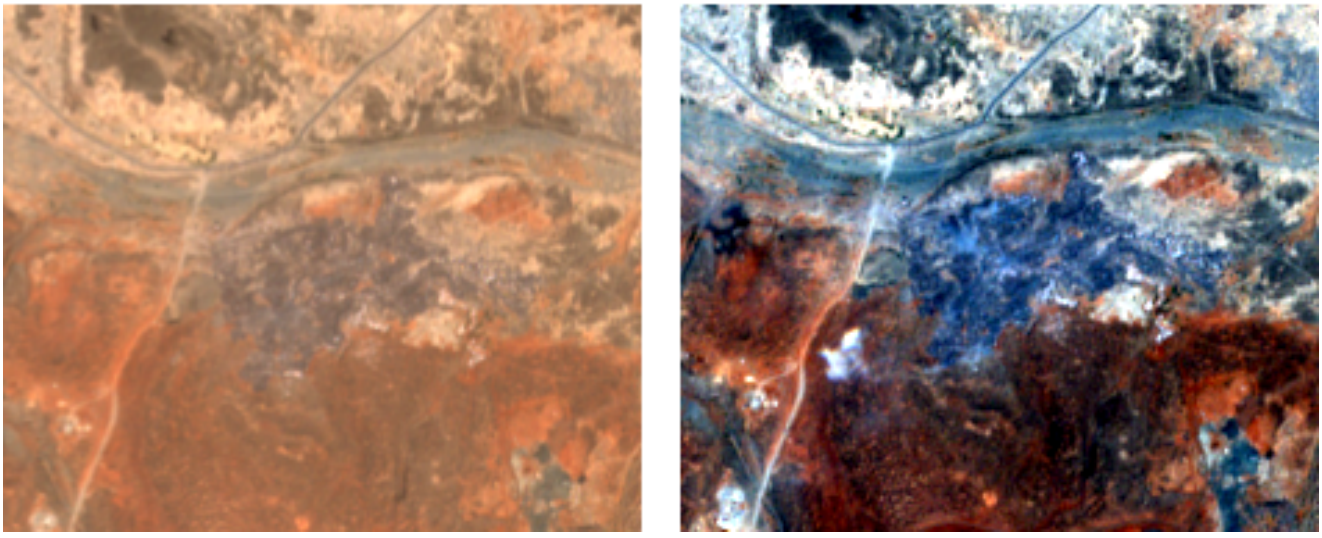


Plate C | Newly retrieved Sentinel-2A 18 Oct (left), retained original Sentinel-2B 21 Oct (right), resampled to identical map grids. Strong display-colour differences; do not interpret them as calibrated burn-area change.

djibouti-douda-dump | Sentinel-2 raw original quicklook 21 Oct 2026

Red rings = approximate historical FIRMS pixel centres; 149 in this frame. NOT burn boundaries.

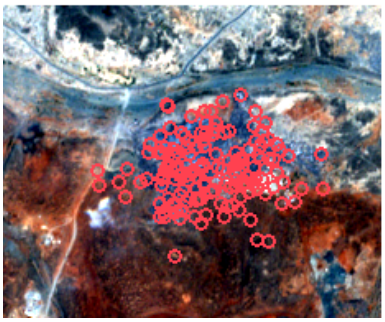


Plate D | Oct 21 original source RGB with deduplicated May–October FIRMS pixel centres. Dense plotted points show recurring sensor locality, not the exact extent of burning.

VISUAL INTERPRETATION: The surface is visibly irregular and dark in the original optical browse image, but cloud, soil brightness and compositing differences make a specific new 18–21 Oct burn scar unconfirmed. Historical record recurrence and institutional documentation justify ground follow-up; no present-day operator, emissions concentration or health risk is measured by Sentinel-2/FIRMS alone.

REPORTER QUESTIONS: What is the legally current status of the formerly closed site? Who is operating any residual disposal/burning? Were air pollution mitigation recommendations from DODIG-2025-041 completed? Were 2025–26 air and particulate measurements taken? Ask OVD and municipal waste authority, Camp Lemonnier, NAVAF/AFRICOM, DoD OIG and affected communities.

4 | CHABELLEY — THE UNEXPLAINED REPEAT SOURCE

The historical archive places six VIIRS pixel observations in a northwest-of-airfield corridor on four separated days. That is evidence of a repeated approximate thermal source, not proof of regular institutional burning. All six detections are daytime; night-time nondetection cannot distinguish intermittent daytime activity from satellite overpass timing and confidence thresholds.



Plate E | Independent 18 Oct source COG paired to retained 21 Oct source quicklook; main runway and apron geometry are consistent. 21 Oct clouds and scene colour differences limit change inference.

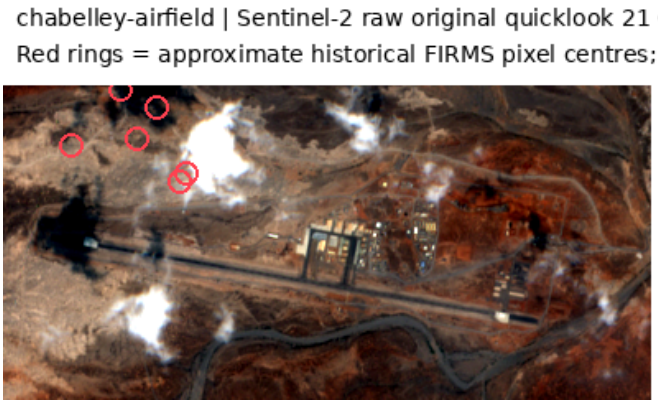


Plate F | Six original sensor pixel centres marked north/northwest of the airfield on the Oct 21 source scene. The image predates the most recent 26 Oct thermal detection.

VIIRS time UTC	FRP MW	Sensor	Distance from analysis anchor
2026-05-04 09:46	5.86	N21	0.04 km
2026-05-04 10:38	16.55	N20	0.26 km
2026-06-22 10:01	4.26	N	0.39 km
2026-06-22 10:02	10.11	N	0.38 km
2026-07-06 10:40	11.48	N	0.32 km
2026-10-26 10:43	4.63	N	0.36 km

ALTERNATIVES: Nearby civilian waste or agricultural combustion, scrub or training fires, persistent warmed ground, geolocation uncertainty and overlapping sensor swaths. U.S. Air Force documents confirm public remotely piloted aircraft activity at Chabelley in 2021; they do not identify the owner or cause of any 2026 thermal anomaly.

NEXT IMAGE TEST: Obtain a verified clear acquisition AFTER 26 Oct 10:43 UTC and calculate masked radiometric/spectral change against a comparable pre-date scene. The 18/21 Oct evidence cannot establish whether the later pixel left a scar.

5 | PLA SUPPORT BASE AND DORALEH PORT

The six-month independently deduplicated FIRMS archive contains no qualifying pixel within the 1km PLA-base anchor radius. A city-wide monitored-area alert may be assigned the name of a high-profile installation without any satellite observation within its grounds. The analytical conclusion is narrower than 'no fire ever': no retained pixel detected under the specified 2026 archive and radius methodology.

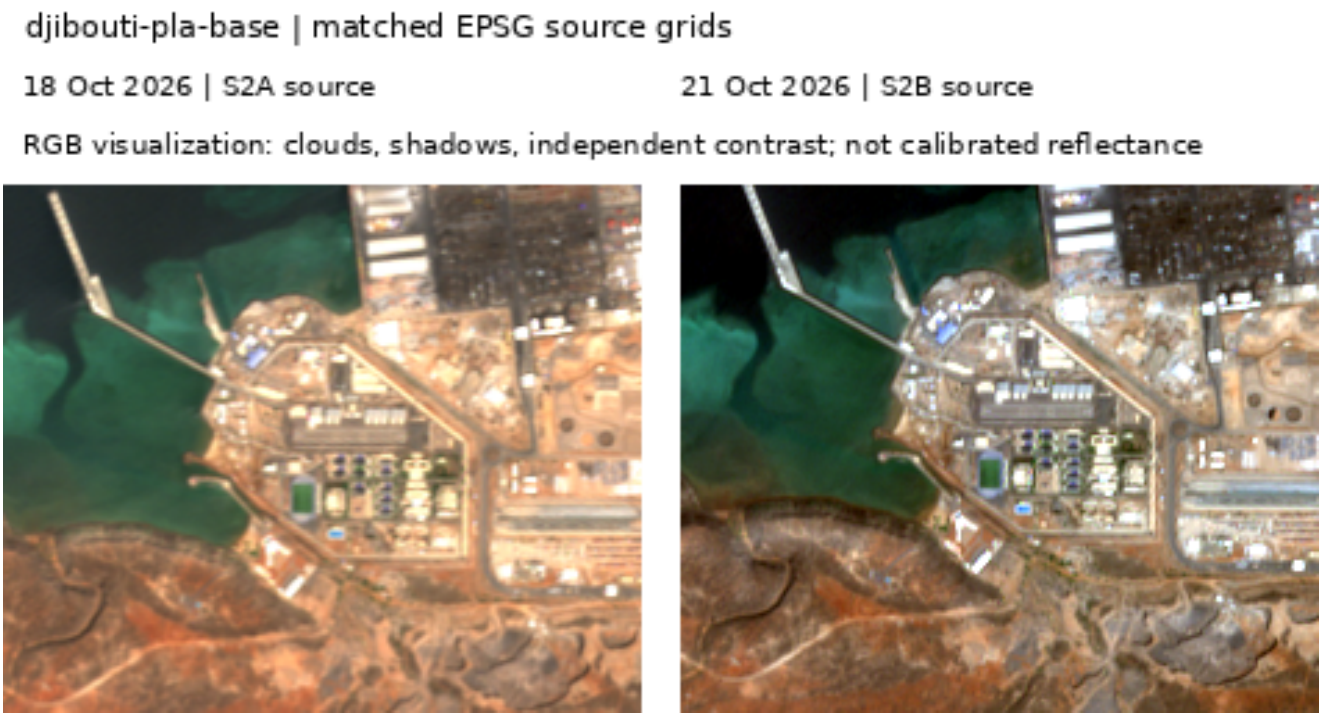


Plate G | Independent Oct 18 vs original Oct 21 Sentinel-2 scene of the PLA Support Base vicinity; major piers/building morphology appears consistent at browse scale. No new large scar confidently resolved.

The Doraleh search radius of 2km yields ONE May 22 source pixel, about 1.56km from the anchor, which is nearby but not proof of fire on a port terminal. Changing the distance rule changes the classification; exact facility polygons would be required for stronger language.



Plate H | Independent Oct 18 vs original Oct 21 port-area visual pair. Harbour/causeway geometry is stable; no verified terminal-specific burning is inferable.

EVIDENCE VERDICT: no verified PLA or Doraleh facility fire from these source datasets. No claim that a small fire could not have been missed by VIIRS or obscured by clouds.

6 | CAMP LEMONNIER AND THE AMBOULI WADI

Six distinct archived thermal pixel records near the independently declared southern-wadi anchor fall on three calendar dates (7 June, 22 August and 27 October). The record is consistent with local episodic heat, not automatically with activity inside the U.S. camp. The latest pixels were observed at 10:41 UTC on Oct 27, well before the evening reporting window.

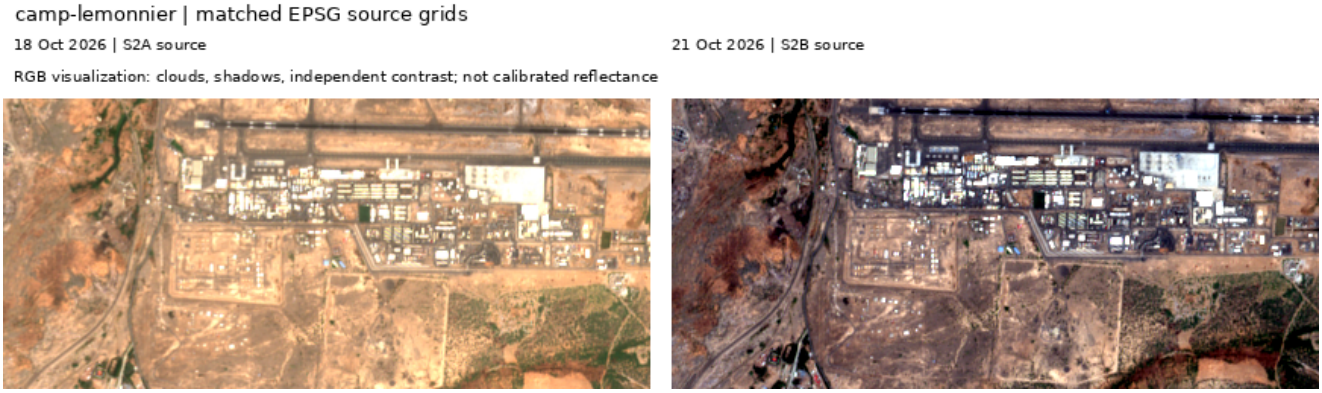


Plate I | Independent Sentinel-2 Oct 18/21 comparison. Camp buildings and airfield remain spatially consistent in the two overview scenes; no specific emissions plume attribution is possible.



Plate J | Oct 21 source image with historic FIRMS pixel positions south of the main Camp Lemonnier footprint. Source imagery is not evidence of actor ownership.

DoD OIG's 2024 findings about poor occupational air-quality management provide a distinct, documented environmental-risk context. They do not establish exposure from any of these 2026 source pixels. Follow-up needs contemporaneous air-monitoring, weather/wind data, land-use and operator records.

7 | RAS LAFFAN — AN INDUSTRIAL THERMAL CONTROL

The retained Ras Laffan historical archive contains 8,208 source records. Its strongest reported source pixel has FRP 169.9 MW in June. The largest identified pixel in the period immediately preceding 016 was 95.9 MW at 17:24 UTC on Oct 27, well BEFORE the 23:00 window start. The exact 23:00–06:30 source interval contains 0 reported archive pixels.

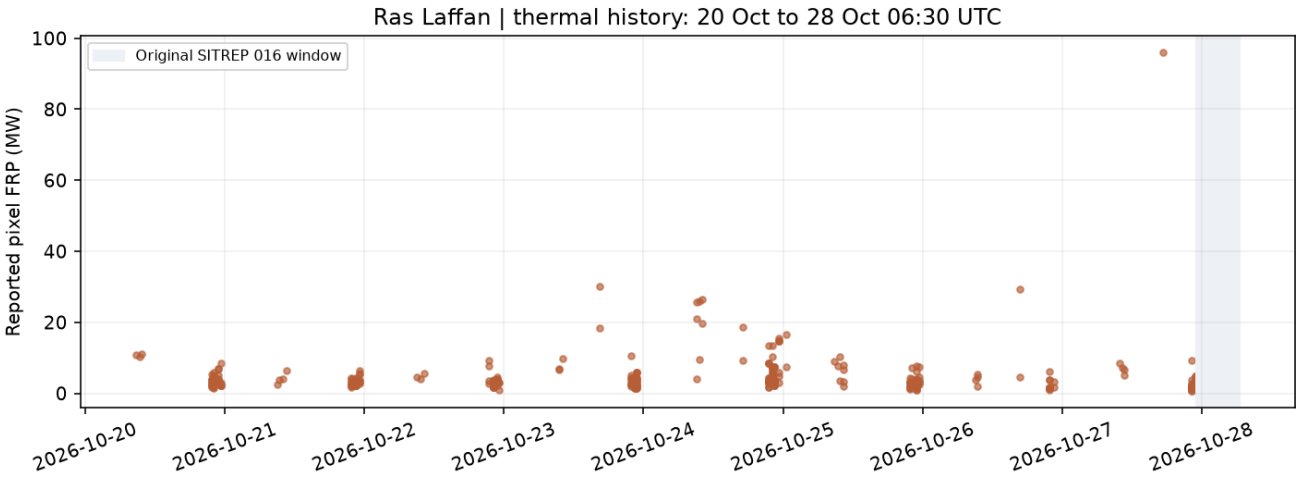


Plate K | Independently plotted Ras Laffan fire-radiative-power measurements during the final week leading into the original 016 night window. Industrial flare stacks are plausible explanations; each pixel's cause is not externally verified.

EVIDENCE VERDICT: no authenticated new hostile event. Recurrent industrial radiative sources warrant cross-checking against facility flare logs, operational notices, wind and acquisition time; FRP magnitude does not prove an attack. Historic maximum is not itself an incident.

8 | EXACT REPORT WINDOW AND LATE PIXELS

The officially fixed 016 window is 27 Oct 23:00 through 28 Oct 06:30 UTC. The independent May–October Djibouti archive includes three Douda sensor pixels at 27 Oct 22:20 and 22:59 UTC. Those acquisitions precede the window by 40 and 1 minute. They can be discussed as recent contextual observations but must NOT be called new detections inside the reporting window.

Acquisition UTC	Locality	FRP MW	Source
2026-10-27 22:20	Douda waste disposal area	2.11	VIIRS_NOAA21_NRT
2026-10-27 22:59	Douda waste disposal area	0.64	VIIRS_SNPP_NRT
2026-10-27 22:59	Douda waste disposal area	0.64	VIIRS_SNPP_NRT

9 | MILITARY ADS-B, AIS AND CITY COVERAGE

The historical movement logs contain repeated receiver messages, not distinct events. Only messages inside the fixed 23:00–06:30 UTC window are considered; data that first appeared after the original report's 06:40 issuance cannot validate what was known at publication.

Feed	Raw rows	In-window observations	Unique identifiers
ADS-B	413	70	19
AIS	6213	809	73
City MILAIR	41	0	0

NOTABLE IDENTIFIED ADS-B: The retained ADS-B records include Qatar Amiri Flight QAF1, aircraft registration A7-HHE (Boeing 747-8), near Ras Laffan at 02:44:47 UTC on Oct 28. This is a direct recorded aircraft signal; it does not explain industrial thermal detections. U.S. military transport/training traffic is visible in the sampled North American watch areas, not a newly detected security incident.

AIS: In-window retained vessel messages are primarily from Halifax, Norfolk and Esquimalt catchments. Repeated messages from an MMSI are not distinct vessels. The later file also contains a Coast Guard cutter example outside the 016 window; it is deliberately NOT promoted as night-window evidence. A missing ship identity from this receiving log cannot prove a vessel had no AIS transmission elsewhere.

CITY MILAIR: The stored Oct 28 city watch file starts in the afternoon UTC, after 016 was issued; it cannot independently support a claim of zero military aircraft across 18 Canadian cities during the preceding night. Treat that portion of the prior report as unverified from this retained file.

Other cross-watches: No independent operational judgement about Western Libya, US/Canadian regional flights, Antarctic routes or ship movements is inferred from the absence of a particular aircraft/vessel record. These are sensor coverage and source preservation limits.

10 | CORRELATION, CONTRADICTIONS AND LEAD DECISIONS

Observation	External correlation	Conclusion
Douda recurrence	DoD OIG documented a historical closed dump and continued burning; AFD waste infrastructure	Reporter lead L1. 2026 source operation and exposure unknown.
Chabelley repeated thermal pixels	2021 USAF documents airfield; no verified 2026 burn-source explanation	Reporter lead L2. Civilian/military ground cause unresolved.
PLA and Doraleh no site-source hit	No site-specific incident source established	Do not assert an attack, damage or all-clear.
Ras Laffan high FRP	Plausible persistent industrial flaring; no impact corroboration	No hostile-incident lead from this signal.
ADS-B / AIS watch	Raw receiver records geolocated and time-limited	No causal link to thermal events.

11 | SOURCES, PROVENANCE AND AUDIT LIMITS

S01 | NASA FIRMS fire-pixel interpretation

https://firms2.modaps.eosdis.nasa.gov/map/

VIIRS/MODIS sensor pixels and known non-detection limits

S02 | U.S. DoD Inspector General, DODIG-2025-041 (20 Nov 2024)

https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reports/2024-12/DODIG-2025-041%20SECURE.pdf

Original public audit: Douda closure, post-closure burning and air-quality risk controls

S03 | AFD Balbala solid waste management programme

https://www.afd.fr/fr/projets/gestion-valorisation-et-traitement-des-dechets-solides-balbala

Primary waste-infrastructure and institutional context

S04 | U.S. VA PACT Act

https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/

General presumptive exposure location, not proof of a specific burn source

S05 | U.S. Air Force Chabelley 12th ESOS (26 Mar 2021)

https://www.usafe.af.mil/Units/435th-Air-Expeditionary-Wing/News/Article/2551507/12-esos-provides-eyes-in-the-sky/

Public 2021 historical facility context, not attribution for 2026 sensor pixels

S06 | NASA VIIRS NRT vs standard processing

https://modaps.modaps.eosdis.nasa.gov/services/about/products/viirs-land-c2-nrt/vj214imgtdl_nrt.html

Why NRT/SP deduplication and geolocation uncertainty matter

CONTEMPORANEOUS INPUT FILES (source from original repository, not Claude figures):

Djibouti six-month CSV | data/firms-area/djibouti_2026-05-01_10-28.csv

SHA256 38dbcd6ab4ca2501322776a7edaefddde9531bfb84b861cd06b593ec922c7aae

Ras Laffan six-month CSV | data/firms-area/ras-laffan_2026-05-01_10-28.csv

SHA256 0009fc249ccb97cfd4b90fe1b94f7c9dba9418e9fe9b1618dbc6a387c0857b3d

Independent new Oct 18 scene: S2A_38PKT_20261018_0_L2A; STAC source acquisition, asset URL and before/after map-grid provenance in INDEPENDENT-OCT18-ACQUISITION.json. Original Oct 21 source scene images and source hashes in VISUAL-PROVENANCE.json. Geolocated FIGURE files and the exact 170 input record list are retained alongside this PDF.

IMPORTANT LIMITS: This report was reconstructed AFTER the original Claude PDF was seen during post-freeze benchmark work. It is a valid independently recalculated source analysis but cannot be scored as a true blind cross-test. Sentinel-2 RGB scene comparisons differ in display tone and show cloud contamination; sensor hotspots do not name operators. Historical 2026 site status of DoD environmental audit recommendations was not independently verified. Human editor sign-off is pending.

INTELLIGENCE/EDITORIAL STATUS: Open-source evidence assessment; not a finding of law, military wrongdoing or a verified environmental emission magnitude. Each reporter lead requires local confirmation and ordinary right of reply.