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## George Clooney's Satellite Sentinel Project Reveals War Crimes, Security Violations Using DigitalGlobe Imagery

June 17, 2013 | Satellite Today | Steve Schuster



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George Clooney, co-founder of the Satellite Sentinel Project visits Sudan, launches effort to monitor peacekeeping violations. Image credit: Tim Freccia/Enough Project

[Satellite TODAY 06-17-13] DigitalGlobe satellite imagery released last week produced evidence that armed forces in Sudan and South Sudan continue to maintain troops in 14 locations in a so-called demilitarized zone, contrary to U.N. reports, and in violation of existing security agreements.

According to a report from the Enough Project and the Satellite Sentinel Project, civilians in Sudan and South Sudan continue to face violence and destruction despite a March agreement by both nations to completely withdraw their respective forces from the border zone by April 5. Satellite imagery taken in May and June of 2013 reveals that nearly two months later,

both nations continue to violate their agreement by maintaining troops within their border zone.

Sudan, which borders Egypt to the north and Libya to the northwest, has seen escalating tension among the rebel Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), which includes the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North, as well as Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement who are fighting against the Sudan Armed Forces and the Khartoum-aligned Popular Defence Force, or PDF militia.

"Civilians in South Kordofan, Sudan, continue to bear the brunt of the recent escalation in hostilities," the report states.

The Satellite Sentinel Project, designed to monitor peacekeeping violations, was formed in 2010 when American actor George Clooney visited Sudan along with the Enough Project Co-founder, John Prendergast. After viewing the conditions the people of Sudan were enduring and the lack of response from outside humanitarian organizations, they developed a plan to monitor "the warlords" using satellites.

"What if we could watch the warlords? Monitor them just like the paparazzi spies on Clooney?," Prendergast asked in a written statement.

With the support of DigitalGlobe, the Satellite Sentinel Project began using satellite imagery to monitor the demilitarized zone. Within a year, the project documented violent attacks, large-scale displacement, and mass graves in Sudan.

"Our satellite imagery independently proves that in spite of their promises otherwise, both Sudan and South Sudan have troops where they should not be. By shining a spotlight on their violations, we hope that the two states will see that they have too much to lose to keep undermining these important agreements," Clooney said in a written statement.

The imagery captures changes in areas otherwise inaccessible to U.N. observers, humanitarian groups and journalists, according to Jonathan Hutson, director of communications with the Enough Project. Without this project's satellite imagery and analysis, "the world would not know the evidence of troop movements or war crimes," he said.

As far as the conflicting U.N. reports, Eri Kaneko a spokesperson with the office of the U.N. Secretary-General said "The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) is supporting a mechanism managed by the parties. If and when the parties report an allegation of violation, a joint verification is conducted, but these can only be done by air until the Force Protection element is deployed. The parties also have disagreements on the exact location of the centerline. The identity of possible violators can not be confirmed at this stage and until the exact location of the centerline of the Safe Demilitarized Border

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Zone is agreed and the Force Protection element is deployed."

DigitalGlobe made headlines of its own in February 2013, when it **completed its merger with GeoEye**, resulting in a total constellation of five satellites. According to DigitalGlobe's website, the company globally collects more than 3 million square kilometers of imagery per day and supports a wide range of defense and intelligence clients, including several responsible for the monitoring, storage and development of weapons.



Before-and-after satellite imagery provides evidence of destruction. Image credit: Enough Project

Before-and-after satellite imagery indicated all of the tukuls (mud huts) in the village of South Kordofan burned during recent April fighting. "This [satellite] imagery provides independent confirmation of the devastating toll that the hostilities between the SRF and SAF continue to take on South Kordofan's civilian infrastructure," the report states.

Images taken of the Sudanese village of Abu Kershola on May 15, 2013 show 20 craters in residential and market areas. Analysts have opined that four were caused by artillery and the remaining 16 are consistent with aerial bombardment. "This satellite imagery proves that armed forces remain in at least 14 locations. ... Sudan and South Sudan need to commit to complete compliance," said Enough Project Sudan/South Sudan, Analyst, Akshaya Kumar.



In the meantime, destruction is rampant. "A fierce three-day battle over Ad Dandour likely led to the complete destruction of civilian structures in the garrison town," the report states. SRF spokesperson Al Gadi Rumboy confirmed in the report that "Sudanese aircraft dropped 12 bombs on the village," resulting in 350 civilians fleeing the village.

Since Sudan received its independence from the United Kingdom in 1956, Islamic-oriented governments have long dominated national politics, which have proven to be unstable including two civil wars lasting throughout the later part of the 20th century, according to the **Central Intelligence**

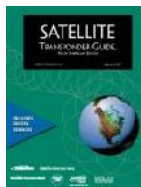
DigitalGlobe satellite imagery and analysis provides valuable intelligence on war crimes in Sudan. Image credit: Enough Project

**Agency (CIA)**. Some of the fighting has stemmed over oil rights.

Satellite Sentinel Project managers say part of the solution stems from satellite technology. "The Satellite Sentinel Project is a game-changing collaboration, combining commercial satellite imagery, academic analysis, and advocacy to promote human rights in Sudan and South Sudan and serve as an early warning system for impending crisis," the project's website states.

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