

Satellite Sentinel Project

ABYEI INCURSION: EVIDENCE OF NORTHERN-ALIGNED FORCES DEPLOYED TO ABYEI REGION, SUDAN

HUMAN SECURITY ALERT PREPARED BY



Harvard
Humanitarian
Initiative

OVERVIEW | 22 MARCH 2011

According to media reports released on 20 March 2011, Sudan's federal Ministry of the Interior recently deployed approximately 1,500 northern police to the environs of Bongo, Diffra, and Goli in northern Abyei, Sudan. Northern representatives, including the spokesman of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), Colonel Khalid Sa'ad Al-Sawarmi, have denied that the northern military deployed troops to Abyei. However, satellite imagery collected by DigitalGlobe and analyzed by the Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) corroborates the reported presence of encampments consistent with military/police installations in close proximity to Bongo, Diffra and Goli.

Imagery captured by DigitalGlobe within the past week reveals fortified camps of at least company and possibly battalion strength in the vicinity of both Diffra and Bongo. The encampment on the road near Bongo shows signs of improved capacity and fortification since imagery of the camp was released in SSP's 10 March 2011 report. Additionally, SSP has identified a new compound consistent with a military outpost of company strength within one km of Goli.

Based on the July 2009 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, the areas that have reportedly been occupied by northern police forces fall within the disputed boundaries of the Abyei Administrative Area. In response to the recent deployment of northern police forces to Bongo, Diffra and Goli, Abyei Chief Administrator, Deng Arop Kuol has accused the NCP of staging an "invasion" of the area to secure northern interests in an area where oil is drilled. The presence of northern-aligned forces within 25 - 75 km of Abyei town and 10 - 60 km of the recently razed villages of Maker-Abior, Todach and Tajelei is indicative of the contested region's continued volatility despite renewed negotiations about the future of Northern and Southern Sudan.

FINDINGS

- Between 9 and 21 March 2011, a camp indicative of a police/military installation capable of housing at least a company-sized unit has been established within one km of Goli on the road between Diffra and Abyei in the Abyei region of Sudan. The encampment has been fortified with a perimeter consistent with foxholes.
- An encampment built around the road near Bongo in the Abyei region of Sudan was previously identified in SSP's 10 March 2011 report; this camp appears to have grown by approximately 25%. The addition of 15-20 tents provides the capacity to house a unit of at least company and possibly battalion size at this outpost. Imagery collected as of 9 March showed fortifications consistent with foxholes constructed in a horseshoe formation; as of 19 March the perimeter of apparent foxholes was completed to encircle the compound.
- A fortified compound consistent with a military installation capable of accommodating a company to battalion strength unit is visible approximately 15 km north of the Diffra oil fields, which lie within the contested Abyei region of Sudan. As of 16 March 2011, approximately four light trucks appear to be parked within the compound. Marks on the road north of the encampment are indicative of a checkpoint associated with the outpost.

CONCLUSION

Satellite imagery confirms the presence of encampments consistent with military/police outposts at each of the locations to which the National Congress Party reportedly deployed northern police forces within the past week. The border regions of Northern and Southern Sudan remain tense in the wake of this month's attacks on Maker Abior, Todach and Tajelei, which displaced some 20,000 civilians, followed by recent skirmishes between the SPLA and allegedly SAF-aligned rebels in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states. The movement of additional northern-backed forces within 75 km of Abyei town heightens the human security risk in the Abyei region, even as negotiations between Northern and Southern Sudanese representatives resumed on 17 March, 2011.

Analysis prepared by HHI and UNITAR/UNOSAT. Imagery and additional analysis provided by DigitalGlobe.

Satellite Sentinel Project is conducting regular, intensive monitoring of Sudan to assess the current human security situation and identify potential threats to civilians.

EXTERNAL FORTIFICATION
CONSISTENT WITH
FOXHOLES

APPROXIMATELY 27 TENTS
CONSISTENT WITH COMPANY-SIZED
FORCE

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COMPOUND CONSISTENT WITH MILITARY ENCAMPMENT IN GOLI | ABYEI REGION, SUDAN

21 MARCH 2011



FORTIFICATION
CONSISTENT WITH
FOXHOLES

APPROXIMATELY
65 TENTS INSIDE
COMPOUND



IMPROVEMENTS TO
FOXHOLING AROUND
THE PERIMETER

APPROXIMATELY
15-20 NEW TENTS
INSIDE COMPOUND
CONSISTENT WITH
AT LEAST COMPANY-
SIZED FORCE



MARKINGS IN ROAD
INDICATIVE OF
CHECKPOINT

APPROXIMATELY 80 TENTS
CONSISTENT WITH AT LEAST
COMPANY-SIZED FORCE

LIGHT TRUCKS

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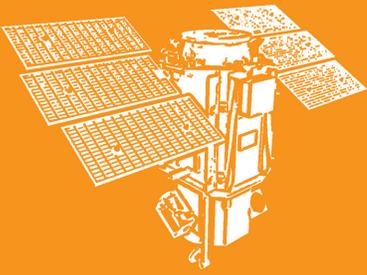
DIGITALGLOBE



unitar

16 MARCH 2011

FORTIFIED COMPOUND IN DIFFRA | ABYEI REGION, SUDAN



Satellite Sentinel Project

ABOUT THE PROJECT AND THE PARTNERS

THE WORLD IS WATCHING BECAUSE YOU ARE WATCHING.

The Satellite Sentinel Project – conceived by George Clooney – combines satellite imagery analysis and field reports with Google’s Map Maker technology to deter the resumption of war between North and South Sudan. The project provides an early warning system to deter mass atrocities by focusing world attention and generating rapid responses on human rights and human security concerns.

This project is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between Not On Our Watch, the Enough Project, Google, the United Nations UNITAR Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), DigitalGlobe, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, and Trellon, LLC.

The project works like this: Commercial satellites passing over the border of northern and southern Sudan are able to capture possible threats to civilians, observe the movement of displaced people, detect bombed and razed villages, or note other evidence of pending mass violence.

UNITAR/UNOSAT leads the collection and analysis of the images and collaborates with Google and Trellon to design the web platform for the public to easily access the images and reports. Harvard Humanitarian Initiative provides system-wide research and leads the collection, human rights analysis, and corroboration of on-the-ground reports that contextualizes the satellite imagery. The Enough Project contributes field reports, provides policy analysis, and, together with Not On Our Watch, and our Sudan Now partners, puts pressure on policymakers by urging the public to act. DigitalGlobe provides satellite imagery and additional analysis.

The Satellite Sentinel Project marks the first sustained, public effort to systematically monitor and report on potential hotspots and threats to security along a border, in near real-time (within 24-36 hours), with the aim of heading off humanitarian disaster and human rights crimes before they occur.

Not On Our Watch – co-founded by Don Cheadle, George Clooney, Matt Damon, Brad Pitt, David Pressman, and Jerry Weintraub – has provided seed money to launch the project. To support the Satellite Sentinel Project, donate at www.satsentinel.org.

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