



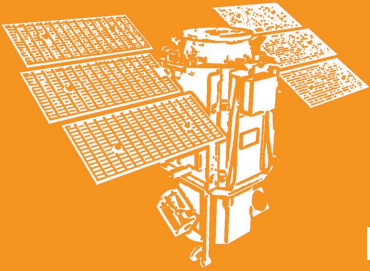
Satellite Sentinel Project

ALERT: HUMAN SECURITY EMERGENCY

BURNED TO THE GROUND

**EVIDENCE OF POTENTIAL WAR CRIMES
AND THE INTENTIONAL DESTRUCTION OF ABYEI TOWN
BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN**

28 MAY 2011



Satellite Sentinel Project

BURNED TO THE GROUND

INTENTIONAL DESTRUCTION OF ABYEI TOWN

ALERT: HUMAN SECURITY EMERGENCY

PREPARED BY



Harvard
Humanitarian
Initiative

28 MAY 2011

Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) has confirmed through the analysis of DigitalGlobe satellite imagery collected on 27 May the intentional destruction of approximately one-third of all civilian structures in Abyei town by the Government of Sudan and northern-aligned militia forces. SSP has documented multiple violations of international humanitarian law in Abyei town. These abuses can constitute war crimes, including violations of the Geneva Conventions, and in some cases they may represent crimes against humanity.

The imagery captures at least ten SAF main battle tanks consistent with T-55s or T-64s, three mobile artillery pieces, heavy equipment transports, heavy trucks and infantry fighting vehicles in Abyei town. Widespread looting, debris, and destruction of property is visible, including the ransacking of the World Food Programme's (WFP) storage facility. Additionally, SSP confirms the destruction of Banton Bridge on the Kiir River south of Abyei town. This is consistent with reports that Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) detonated the bridge.

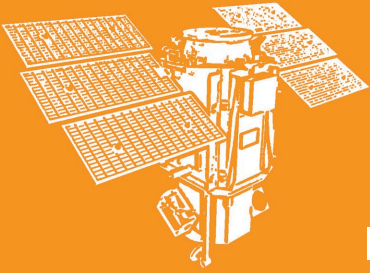
EVIDENCE OF VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Satellite imagery analyzed by Harvard Humanitarian Initiative with support from DigitalGlobe provides new evidence of SAF forces carrying out extensive and wanton destruction and appropriation of property without the justification of military necessity. The attacks on civilian objects under the SAF's occupation of Abyei town constitute violations of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and its First and Second Additional Protocols of 1977 to which Sudan is party.

The burning of up to one-third of civilian structures in Abyei town corroborates reports of mass displacement from the region following the SAF occupation of Abyei town. Additionally, the destruction of Banton Bridge (fig. 5) has restricted access for the estimated 80,000 internally displaced persons who may intend to return to Abyei. The attacks on Abyei town which caused the displacement of the civilian population constitute a violation of Protocol II to the Fourth Geneva Convention, which provides that: "Civilians shall not be compelled to leave their own territory for reasons connected with the conflict."¹

As previously noted, SSP analysis notes the razing of up to one-third of civilian structures in Abyei town as of 27 May 2011. The apparent destruction of civilian structures, including houses, is a contravention of Customary International Humanitarian Law (IHL) prohibiting indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations. Rule 7 of Customary IHL stipulates: "The parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks may only be directed against military objectives. Attacks must not be directed against civilian objects."²

Imagery depicting debris consistent with reports of extensive looting of structures in Abyei town provides evidence of a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibits "Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to other public authorities, or to social or cooperative organizations. . . except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations."³



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Imagery showing debris indicative of looting of the WFP storage facility in Abyei town corroborates UN reports of SAF and northern-aligned forces looting supplies, including: “medicines, surgical equipment, 800 tons of food – enough to feed 50,000 people for three months – non-food items and water and hygiene equipment. Those supplies had been dispatched to Abyei town in recent weeks to respond to the urgent needs of the town’s residents and the rural population in surrounding villages.”⁴ Figure 3 provides evidence of actions consistent with a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which mandates: “The Occupying Power may not requisition foodstuffs, articles or medical supplies available in the occupied territory, except for use by the occupation forces and administration personnel, and then only if the requirements of the civilian population have been taken into account.”⁵

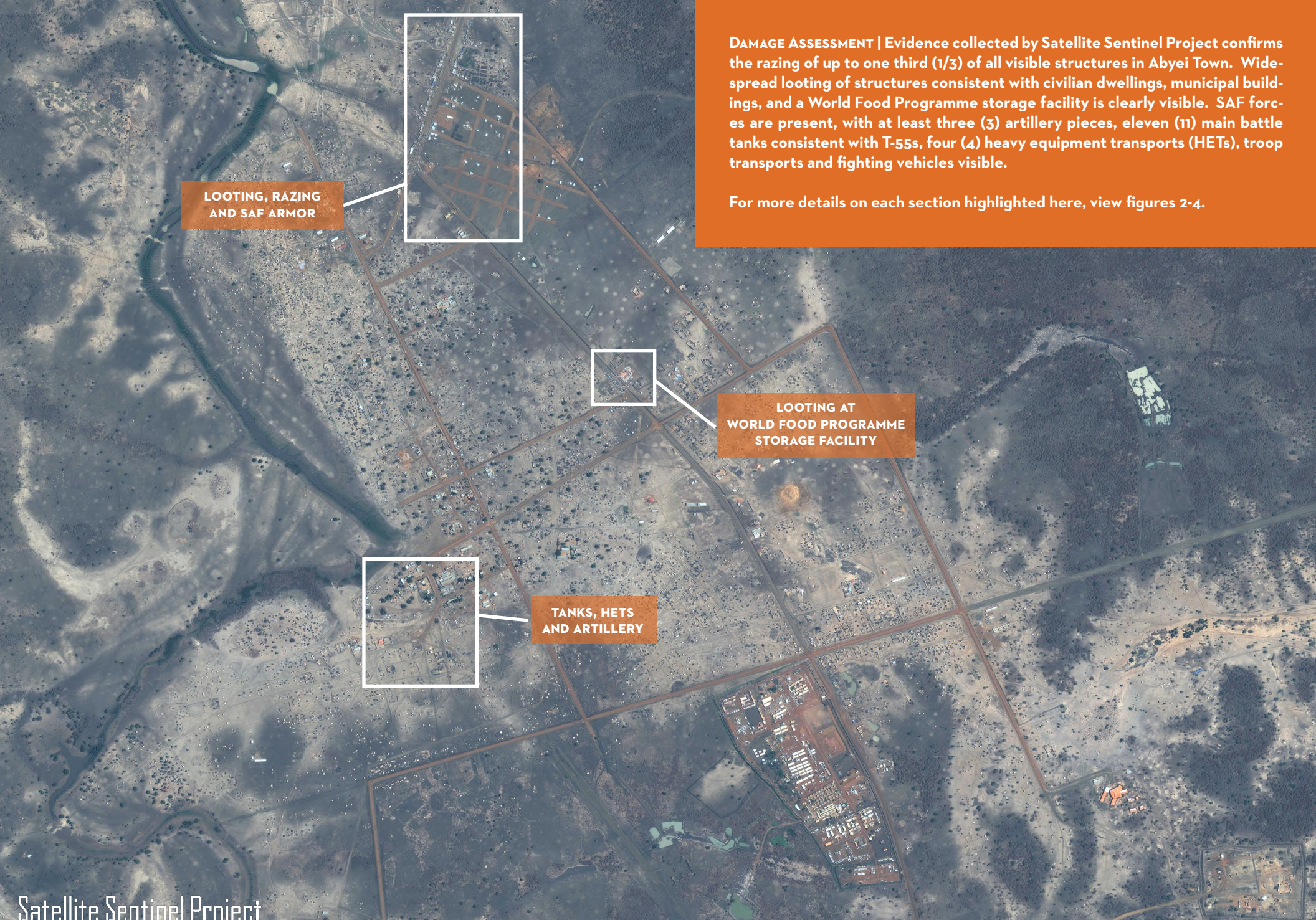
ENDNOTES

1. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), art. 17, June 8, 1977, 1125 U.N.T.S. 616.
2. ICRC, Customary IHL Database, http://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule7.
3. Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, art. 53, Aug. 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 322.
4. “Sudan: UN deplores looting of humanitarian supplies in Abyei.” UN News Centre . 27 May 2011. UN News Service. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38531&Cr=abyei&Cr1=>
5. Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, art. 55, Aug. 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 323-4.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

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

Analysis prepared by Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. Imagery and additional analysis provided by DigitalGlobe. Cover image from razed village of Todach provided by Tim Freccia for the Enough Project.



DAMAGE ASSESSMENT | Evidence collected by Satellite Sentinel Project confirms the razing of up to one third (1/3) of all visible structures in Abyei Town. Widespread looting of structures consistent with civilian dwellings, municipal buildings, and a World Food Programme storage facility is clearly visible. SAF forces are present, with at least three (3) artillery pieces, eleven (11) main battle tanks consistent with T-55s, four (4) heavy equipment transports (HETs), troop transports and fighting vehicles visible.

For more details on each section highlighted here, view figures 2-4.

LOOTING, RAZING
AND SAF ARMOR

LOOTING AT
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME
STORAGE FACILITY

TANKS, HETS
AND ARTILLERY





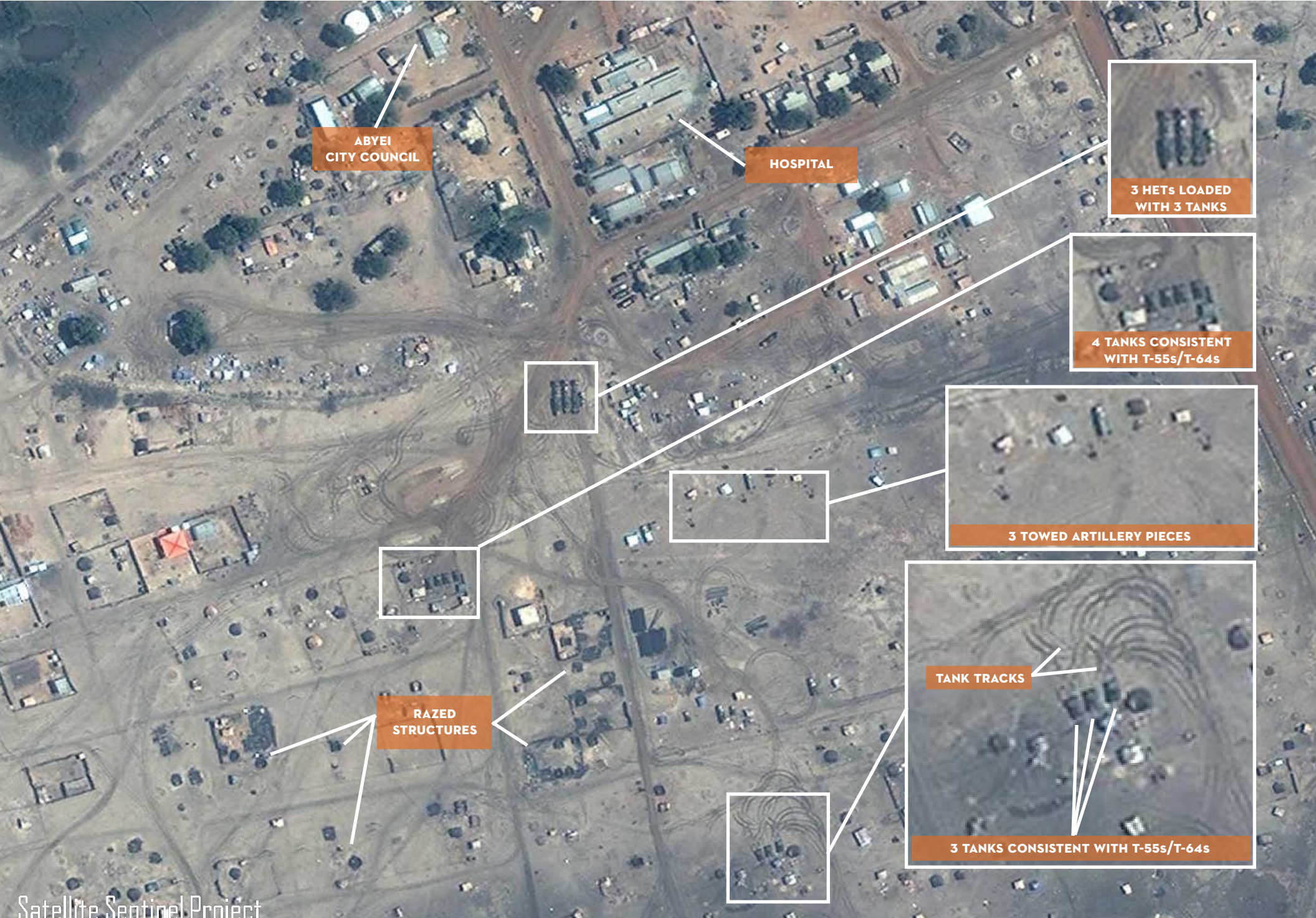
RAZED
STRUCTURES

LOOTED WFP
STORAGE FACILITY

EVIDENCE OF
WIDESPREAD LOOTING

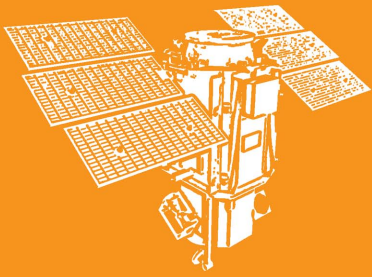
RAZED
STRUCTURES

Satellite Sentinel Project



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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, 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.

Google and Trellon 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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