

Satellite Sentinel Project

HUMAN SECURITY ALERT

**CHOKEPOINT:
EVIDENCE OF SAF CONTROL
OF REFUGEE ROUTE TO SOUTH SUDAN**

27 JANUARY 2012



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REPORTED BY



Harvard
Humanitarian
Initiative

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OVERVIEW

Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP), through the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's analysis of DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, has confirmed that at least a battalion sized unit of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) appear to control the main route civilians reportedly use to flee South Kordofan for Yida refugee camp. The interior of the apparent base, which is located in the town of Toroge, contains objects consistent with 80 to 90 tent-like structures, infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), artillery, and heavy armor vehicles, which appear to be main battle tanks.

In *Siege: Evidence of SAF Encirclement of the Kauda Valley* released 25 January 2012, SSP reported that the SAF had restricted access to the road leading towards South Sudan from South Kordofan. The imagery in this report specifically identifies a new fortified chokepoint along that road under apparent SAF control, which was established sometime after 23 November 2011.



PLANE CONSISTENT WITH ANTONOV AN-24
SIGHTED LESS THAN 5 KM NORTH OF TOROGE

SSP has also identified smoke plumes consistent with tube artillery bombardment near that apparent SAF base at Toroge. An Antonov An-24, an aircraft often used by SAF for harassment aerial bombardment, was also sighted less than 5 km from Toroge. These images are consistent with reports of artillery and aerial bombardment in the area.

There is evidence consistent with civilian dwellings in Toroge having been abandoned. Some of those structures appear to have been destroyed, indicated by scorched earth and some burned buildings. This evidence, in part, is consistent with similar imagery collected in the town of Buram. There, according to SSP's analysis, structures are consistent with having been abandoned sometime between 21 May and 1 November 2011.¹ Toroge is approximately 17 km / 10 mi south of Buram on the Buram-Jau road. Civilians have reportedly fled both Toroge and Buram.

The recent entrenchment of SAF forces at Toroge effectively severs the main route civilians fleeing South Kordofan have taken to reach the Yida refugee camp in South Sudan. The camp, approximately 45 km / 28 mi south of Toroge, is currently housing at least 24,000 refugees from South Kordofan,² according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This act by the Government of Sudan further threatens the approximately 200,000 civilians remaining in the Nuba Mountains, who already face bombardment and imminent starvation.

TIMELINE OF SAF AND SPLA-N FIGHTING NEAR TOROGE

On 1 December 2011, SAF alleged that they captured the Sudan People's Liberation Army- North's (SPLA-N) stronghold of Toroge, South Kordofan. A SPLA-N rebel fighter reported that fighting had been occurring in the area since 30 November 2011 and had spread to an area 15 km / 9 mi east of Toroge where SAF was reportedly attacking with heavy artillery and tanks.³ Yasir Arman, Secretary General of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), confirmed the attacks on the Buram-Toroge area and reported that the SAF offensive resulted in significant civilian displacement from the area.⁴



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Fighting continued in Toroge between SAF and SPLA-N forces on 12 December 2011, with SPLA-N reporting heavy artillery bombardment.⁵ As of 15 January 2012, SAF had allegedly continued to bombard the area. The UN has received reports of SAF bombardment at Toroge, Buram and in towns east of Kadugli.⁶ In addition, sources alleged directly to SSP that aerial bombardments hit Tagoli, Buram locality on 24 January.

SOURCES

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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.
Lower cover photograph provided by Tim Freccia for the Enough Project.





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BACKGROUND

On 1 December 2011, SAF alleged that they captured a key Sudan People's Liberation Army- North (SPLA-N) stronghold of Toroge, South Kordofan. Yasir Arman, Secretary General of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), confirmed the attacks on the Buram-Toroge area and reported that the SAF offensive resulted in massive civilian displacement from the area.

ROAD TO JAU
AND YIDA, SOUTH SUDAN

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STRUCTURES AND LIGHT VEHICLES
CONSISTENT WITH AT LEAST
BATTALION-SIZE SAF DEPLOYMENT

APPARENT ABANDONED
CIVILIAN STRUCTURES

DEFENSIVE
FORTIFICATION

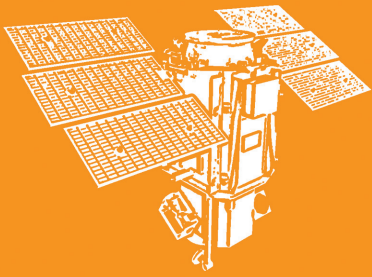
SCORCHED EARTH AND
RAZED STRUCTURES

ROAD TO JAU
AND YIDA, SOUTH SUDAN

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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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