

Satellite Sentinel Project

RANGE OF ATTACK: DEPLOYMENT OF SAF ATTACK HELICOPTERS, TANKS NEAR ABYEI

PREPARED BY



Harvard
Humanitarian
Initiative

7 APRIL 2011 | OVERVIEW

In recent weeks, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) has deployed heavy offensive weaponry, including attack helicopters and tanks, at Muglad, the reported headquarters of the SAF's 15th Division. These units include two helicopters consistent with Mi-24 Hind gunships, at least nine main battle tanks consistent with T-55s, and trucks consistent with support vehicles needed for the forward deployment of heavy armor. The helicopters, tanks and support vehicles are all within attack range of the Abyei region, approximately 175 kilometers away from Abyei town and 100 kilometers from Abyei's border as demarcated by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2009.

In the past two months, Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) has identified a total of at least 13 tanks newly based in South Kordofan within 200 kilometers of Abyei. It is likely that four tanks documented by SSP at Kharassana remain concealed there. SSP analysis of DigitalGlobe satellite imagery also reveals the recent construction of reinforced fortifications at a SAF-aligned encampment near Goli in the Abyei region and the arrival of light vehicles at that location.

The introduction of attack helicopters and main battle tanks within range of Abyei constitutes a major escalation of SAF military capacity in the area. Additionally, these deployments have occurred while recent improvements have been made to the roads north and south of the Muglad base and upgrades to the airbase's on-site fueling capacity, as SSP previously documented.

These developments are occurring at the same time as northern and southern-aligned forces remain deployed in close proximity to one another inside the Abyei region. The incursions into Abyei of northern and southern forces over the past month confirmed by SSP have been internationally recognized as violations of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) committed by both sides. In this context, deployment of these offensive-specific capabilities within attack range of Abyei represents an additional threat to the already precarious human security of civilians in and around the region.

FINDINGS

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery in this report shows:

- The off-loading and subsequent presence of at least nine main battle tanks consistent with T-55s. Light trucks commonly in use by SAF and heavy vehicles consistent with those used to support the movement of heavy armor are also visible. [Fig 1]
- Apparent basing of helicopters consistent with Mi-24 gunships at Muglad and the presence of a white helicopter consistent with a Mi-8. A white, fixed wing airplane consistent with a G-222 transport plane was also observed at the location on 16 March 2011. [Fig 2]
- Reinforcement of previously built fortifications at the Goli encampment and the presence of two light vehicles. [Fig 3]

CONCLUSIONS

- Mi-24 Hind gunships have a flight range of approximately 450 kilometers, placing the helicopters at Muglad within attack range of Abyei town and the vicinity, approximately 175 kilometers away. Hind attack helicopters are reportedly being used by SAF in ongoing combat operations in Darfur.
- T-55 main battle tanks have an estimated operational range of approximately 500 kilometers, which theoretically places the tanks at Muglad within attack range of Abyei town by road.
- The two light vehicles seen at the SAF-aligned installation near Goli are the first vehicles of any kind seen by SSP at any of the reported northern-aligned forward encampments in Abyei region. The Associated Press published claims on 28 February 2011 that SAF-aligned militia forces who allegedly carried out attacks in the Abyei region in February and March 2011 used light vehicles with mounted machine guns.

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 and UNITAR/UNOSAT. Imagery and additional analysis provided by DigitalGlobe.

19 MARCH

CARGO TRUCKS

LIGHT VEHICLES

HETs CARRYING
AT LEAST 5 TANKS
CONSISTENT WITH
T-55s

AT LEAST 3 OFFLOADED
TANKS CONSISTENT
WITH T-55s

28 MARCH

CARGO TRUCK

LIGHT VEHICLES

HETs
AND AT LEAST
9 TANKS
CONSISTENT
WITH T-55s

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TANKS, HETs, & VEHICLES DEPLOYED AT BASE | MUGLAD, REPORTED 15TH DIVISION HQ

19 TO 28 MARCH 2011 | FIG 1

16 MARCH

19 MARCH

24 MARCH

28 MARCH

PLANE
CONSISTENT WITH
G-222

FUEL STORAGE
FACILITY

HELICOPTER
CONSISTENT WITH
Mi-8

HELICOPTERS
CONSISTENT WITH
Mi-8s OR Mi-24s

HELICOPTERS CONSISTENT WITH Mi-24s

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HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS, OTHER AIRCRAFT AT AIRSTRIIP | MUGLAD, REPORTED 15TH DIVISION HQ

16 TO 28 MARCH 2011 | FIG 2

21 MARCH

OUTER
FORTIFICATIONS

27 STRUCTURES

28 MARCH

REINFORCED
OUTER FORTIFICATIONS

LIGHT VEHICLES

Satellite Sentinel Project



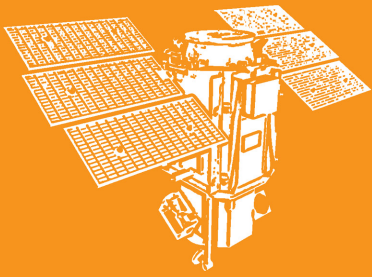
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21 TO 28 MARCH 2011 | FIG 3
SAF-ALIGNED ENCAMPMENT | GOLI, ABYEI REGION



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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