Cameras on the Battlefield
Multimedia Confirmation of the Razing of Gardud al Badry, South Kordofan, Sudan

Satellite Sentinel Project
Monitoring the Crisis in the Sudans
satsentinel.org
Cameras on the Battlefield
Multimedia Confirmation of the Razing of Gardud al Badry, South Kordofan, Sudan

October 16, 2012
A newly discovered video obtained by a group of Sudanese journalists with Nuba Reports and analyzed by the Satellite Sentinel Project, or SSP, confirms that the government of Sudan is continuing its campaign of violence against its own civilians through joint operations of army, militia, and police forces that are committing war crimes and recording them on cell phone cameras.

Nuba Reports, a Sudanese journalist organization based in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan's war-torn border state of South Kordofan, brought to SSP's attention the cell phone video of the village razing, shot on May 18, 2012. Two journalists then traveled one day by motorcycle and four days by foot to the remote village of Gardud al Badry on the frontlines of the region's ongoing civil war—which does not appear on maps—to take GPS-tagged photographs and videotape interviews with survivors. They arrived on August 1, just three days after the Sudan Armed Forces, or SAF, had returned to bombard the village with artillery. SSP then corroborated the photos, videos, and eyewitness reports with DigitalGlobe satellite imagery.

SSP's analysis of the evidence shows that a joint unit composed of Sudan's Central Reserve Police, also known as Abu Tira; Sudan Armed Forces, or SAF; and Popular Defense Forces, or PDF militia, razed and looted the village on the morning of May 18, and abducted a young Nuban man.
The cell phone video, shot by two Abu Tira officers, shows a student being tied up and interrogated at gunpoint in the back of a “technical”—a Land Cruiser mounted with a machine gun—as the village goes up in flames.

The interrogators rapidly fire a series of orders and questions to ascertain whether their captive is a rebel (he denies this) and where the villagers keep their cattle:

“Tie him down like a goat.” “Are you a rebel?” “Let me just finish him.” “No, no, no; keep him alive.” “Where are the cows?”

They find a student ID on him, and he says he goes to school in al Abassiya—a town in the Rashad District of South Kordofan, where the government of Sudan has recently conducted a campaign of razing, looting, and bombardment.
Frame-by-frame analysis of the uniforms worn by the various forces in the video shows that at least four of the attackers, including the two camera operators, were from Abu Tira, the notoriously brutal police force, evidence of whose war crimes SSP has previously documented in an October 2011 report, “In Close Proximity.” Abu Tira’s distinctive insignia is a circular or oval emblem depicting an eagle with spread wings clutching a red sun, over an icon of an eye, the Eye of Horus. Horus is an Egyptian deity, a sun god also known as a god of war, hunting, and protection. Abu Tira’s uniforms, made by China’s Wuhan Litalai Uniform Manufacturing Company, Ltd., are desert camouflage with the eagle emblem printed on the fabric. This insignia is apparent on the uniforms of at least four of the attacking forces, and is the first documented video evidence of Abu Tira participating in systematic razing and looting.

Systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure, through razing and/or indiscriminate bombardment, and looting of cattle, can constitute a crime against humanity and represents a gross violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.

One of the officers can be seen wearing the Abu Tira patch on his shoulder as the interrogation continues:

“Get information from him, then kill him.” “He doesn’t know anything. He’s nothing.”

The questioning concludes with one interrogator stating, “With this flame we extinguish the burning sedition in South Kordofan. By God, we will not give away an inch of our land.”
DigitalGlobe satellite imagery of the village taken on June 19, 2011, compared with new imagery taken on September 8, 2012, reveals damage to numerous residential structures known as “tukuls”, along with the destruction of several classrooms in the village's school compound. Villagers reported that the SAF bombardment on July 29 leveled the fence around the compound and blew the roofs off classrooms. Photos by Nuba Reports confirm this, and also show ashes on the ground and apparent shrapnel holes in chalkboards.

SSP has previously reported on razings carried out by the “Match Battalion,” a joint unit comprised of SAF and PDF, that were also documented via cell phone camera. Thus, the attack on Gardud al Badry adds to mounting evidence of a pattern of indiscriminate attacks and destruction on the part of the government of Sudan.

**Multimedia**

SSP and Nuba Reports have co-produced a companion video to this report, “Village Burning and Torture in the Nuba Mountains: Naim's Story”, which includes the cell phone footage, translated by SSP, as well as a Nuba Reports interview with the Nuban captive. He is an 18-year-old named Naim, in his second year of high school, who describes his 10 days of detention, interrogation and torture in Al Abassiya, South Kordofan, Sudan. The video is published on the website of the Satellite Sentinel Project. In addition, SSP has published a slideshow of the visual evidence on the Enough Project's Flickr account.

**Youtube URL**: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzwXype1s2c

**Flickr Slideshow URL**: http://www.flickr.com/photos/enoughproject/sets/721576317417422176/with/8077518726/
Frames from the cell phone video obtained by SSP from Nuba Reports. Two Abu Tira officers shot the video while a joint unit of SAF, PDF militia, and Abu Tira burned and looted the village of Gardud al Badry, and interrogated a captive Nuban student. SAF soldiers and Abu Tira officers posed for the camera, brandishing their weapons while shouting, “Allahu Akhbar” (God is great).
BEFORE (left): DigitalGlobe satellite image of scorched residential structures (“tukuls”) in Gardud al Badry, South Kordofan, Sudan, June 19, 2011.

AFTER (right): DigitalGlobe satellite image of destroyed tukuls in Gardud al Badry, South Kordofan, Sudan, September 8, 2012. A joint unit of SAF, PDF militia, and Abu Tira razed the village on May 18, and SAF returned to bombard it with artillery on July 29.
BEFORE (left): DigitalGlobe satellite image of a fenced school compound in Gardud al Badry, South Kordofan, Sudan, June 19, 2011.

Corn and squash invade the ruins of burned tukuls in Gardud al Badry. Photos by Nuba Reports.

The Government of Sudan’s indiscriminate artillery bombardment of Gardud al Badry on July 29, 2012, blew the roof off this classroom, and shrapnel tore a hole through the chalkboard. Photos by Nuba Reports.
About the Satellite Sentinel Project and the Partners

SSP launched on December 29, 2010, with the goals of preventing a return to full-scale civil war between northern and southern Sudan as well as detecting, deterring and documenting threats to civilians along both sides of the border. SSP focuses world attention on pending incidents of mass violence in the Sudans and uses imagery and analysis to generate rapid responses on human rights and human security concerns.

The project works like this: A constellation of three DigitalGlobe satellites passing over Sudan and South Sudan captures imagery of possible threats to civilians, detects bombed and razed villages, or notes other evidence of mass atrocities or pending mass violence. SSP analyzes the imagery, open source data, and information from sources on the ground to produce reports.

The Enough Project contributes field reports, policy analysis, and communication strategy and, together with Not On Our Watch, pressures policymakers by urging the public to act. DigitalGlobe provides high-resolution satellite imagery and analysis conducted by the DigitalGlobe Analysis Center.

SSP is the first sustained public effort to systematically monitor and report on potential hotspots and threats to human security in near real-time.

SSP is primarily funded by Not On Our Watch. To support the Satellite Sentinel Project, donate at satsentinel.org.