

# The Documentation of Human Rights Violations by Satellites: The Satellite Sentinel Project

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## Abstract

The present work aims to examine and study the organization “The Satellite Sentinel Project”, created to monitor the commission of international crimes in Sudan, which was essential to support the attacked civilian population and document human rights violations that occurred during the Civil War. By that, it is possible to understand that space technology can also be considered an important asset in the human rights protection systems, especially regarding the production of evidence of heinous acts of violence. Therefore, an important question arises: are those images able to guarantee legal standards to human rights systems regardless of the lack of regulation of satellite use in this particular area? For this purpose, the Sudan case was studied in light of the evidence obtained by the Satellite Sentinel Project, in order to understand its effectiveness. In sequence, the Space Law instruments, which regulate Earth observation and remote sensing activities, were examined. Finally, the discussion relied on the lawfulness and admissibility of satellite imagery as evidence before accountability proceedings.

**Keywords:** Documentation of international crimes; satellite images; evidence; Space Law instruments.

## 1. Introduction

The Soviet Union and the United States engaged in a race seeking to reach the space environment during the period of the Cold War, and in October of 1957, the Soviets succeeded in launching the first satellite to Outer Space.

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The Sputnik I and its orbit represent the beginning of the First Space Age because it made access to space possible after years of scientific research.

Nowadays the access to Outer Space is a reality that allowed the society to organize itself by the use of its technologies. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that this process was structured according to Space Law, as it was essential to prevent conflicts in space exploration activities, which involved state and economic interests.

Currently, the space sector has expanded and changed because new actors gained undeniable importance in the exploration and uses of Outer Space, especially in the economic segment. For that reason, not only sovereign Nations are managing the use of satellites, for instance, but also big companies and non-state organizations.

It was in the scenario that George Clooney created a NGO named The Satellite Sentinel Project. After a visit to Sudan in 2010, Clooney decided to assist the civilian population targeted by the Civil War that took place in several areas of the country, which resulted in uncountable deaths, including women and children.

The NGO's proposal was to obtain images from satellites and inform people in the attacked areas, in order to prevent further damages. Thus, the reports made by the specialists would also be used to document those atrocities and provide evidence to authorities that could not only assist in the prevention of such crimes, but also in eventual accountability procedures.

Considering these issues, the present paper aims to study the Satellite Sentinel Project and some of its results regarding satellite uses in order to understand the impacts of space technologies in human rights systems. Additionally, the paper will examine if the dialogue between International Law, Space Law, and International Criminal Law principles deem the production of satellite imagery as evidence as lawful and admissible.

## **2. The Satellite Sentinel Project**

The famous Hollywood actor George Clooney engaged in a humanitarian expedition to Sudan and faced the results of an ongoing Civil War. The Guardian Newspaper reported that Clooney encountered several corpses, children with missing hands and entire villages forced to live in caves.<sup>1</sup> After this event, Clooney contacted Google and DigitalGlobe – the Company responsible for Google Earth's images – and along with John Prendergast founded The Satellite Sentinel Project. The NGO aimed to produce satellite imagery and, like a sentinel, surveil the activities in Sudan in order to prevent attacks and mitigate unfortunate results by keeping the civilians aware of possible strikes.

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1 P. Harris, George Clooney's satellite spies reveal secrets of Sudan's bloody army, *The Guardian*, 24 March 2012.

## THE DOCUMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY SATELLITES: THE SATELLITE SENTINEL PROJECT

Nathaniel A. Raymond,<sup>2</sup> the former director of the SSP, along with members of the organization, examined some of the reports produced after the independence of South Sudan, in 2011, and outlined that the monitor of international conflicts by satellite means was based on three pillars: “1) identify and predict whether and when atrocities may happen, 2) warn civilians of possible attacks and eliminate elements of surprise and 3) record evidence of human rights violations”.

The third pillar, that is the most controversial one, is the main subject of study in the present work because it is important to understand its use and effectiveness in accordance to International Law, Space Law and International Criminal Law with a view to stressing the impact of space technologies in international justice proceedings.

Several reports were issued from SSP and all of them are available on the NGO’s website,<sup>3</sup> and all of them were submitted to authorities, to the UN Security Council, and to the International Criminal Court. The situation of Darfur, in the west of Sudan, was brought before ICC from a Security Council’s referral in March 2005, according to the Resolution 1593 (2005).<sup>4</sup>

The SSP played an important role in the investigations and further proceedings regarding this particular case because the images provided by the organization were and are still being used by the Office of the Prosecutor of ICC to support evidence of bombardments and attacks, apparent mass graves, forced displacement, and village razings.<sup>5</sup>

The SSP’s activities did not rely only upon the production of images from the DigitalGlobe Company, but also in the data analysis from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, the distribution of information from other NGOs – Not on Our Watch and Enough Project – and the production of reports from the SSP’s staff. The importance of thorough analysis is such that it demands experts’ efforts and specialized knowledge in order to present accurate results. Handling this particular type of data may be challenging because of its high costs and unusual structure, but Lindsay Freeman defends that “the

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2 B. Y. Wang, N. A. Raymond, G. Gould, I. Baker, Problems from Hell, Solution in the Heavens?: Identifying Obstacles and Opportunities for Employing Geospatial Technologies to Document and Mitigate Mass Atrocities, Stability, *International Journal of Security & Development*, 53, 2013, 1-18.

3 The Satellite Sentinel Project, 2010, Documenting the Crisis.

4 Security Council Refers Situation in Darfur, Sudan, To Prosecutor of International Criminal Court, United Nations Security Council, 31 March 2005.

5 Nineteenth Report of The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to the Un Security Council Pursuant To UNSCR 1593, Office of the Prosecutor - International Criminal Court, 2005.

conducted cases have been significantly stronger from an evidentiary standpoint than the witness-focused cases”.<sup>6</sup>

The Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC realized that those images could be a valuable asset in the investigations and prosecutions before the court as documentary evidence and for that reason, an expert on satellite images analysis was hired to assist not only in the Darfur situation but also in other cases in which the satellite technology has been adopted.<sup>7</sup>

The production of evidence by satellites demands hard work from all parties involved however, the results often balance the equation because the demonstration of facts from images can sometimes be more enlightening and reliable than other evidentiary categories.

It is possible to declare that those types of images, which consist of “high-resolution photographs, charts or maps (...)” hardly will be submitted to a legal procedure by itself as a demonstration of human rights violations because they can only offer a narrative of the situation but not the whole context involved.<sup>89</sup> In conclusion, the data analyst will need a strategic dynamic in order to capture the covered event and demonstrate the intent and the connection of the facts.

Regardless of the limitations of these technologic instruments, the satellite images used in accountability procedures can often corroborate issues that sometimes are unlikely to be confirmed by other evidence because they make possible to construct narratives and demonstrate the systematicity and dynamic behind those atrocities, which is a concern of International Criminal Law, for instance.

The SSP is no longer active since 2015 when its supporters ceased the collection and analysis of imagery. Albeit the situation in Darfur is still active and ongoing before the International Criminal Court, the results of the 5-year efforts from the SSP were enough to support indictments and prosecutions of international crimes in Sudan.

### 3. Satellite use and regulation

The international legal system known as Space Law regulates the use of satellites. This regime is composed of five important treaties; however, the Outer Space Treaty, and the Remote Sensing Resolution, also created within UN organs, mostly dictate the standards applied to the activities investigated.

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6 L. Freeman, Digital Evidence and War Crimes Prosecutions: The Impact of Digital Technologies of International Criminal Investigations and Trials, *Fordham International Law Journal*, 42, 2018, 283-336.

7 C. Candelmo, V. Nardone, Satellite Evidence in Human Rights Cases: Merits and Shortcomings, *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 1, 2017, 87-113.

8 Candelmo, Nardone, 2017, 87-113.

9 Wang, Raymond, Gould, Baker, 2013, p. 1-18.

The Outer Space Treaty, in its preamble, clarifies that “the exploration of Outer Space must be carried in the benefit of all peoples”.<sup>10</sup> This statement is strengthened by Article III that imposes to all subjects and actors of Space Law that “the use of Outer Space must be in accordance with International Law and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security”.<sup>11</sup> Article II states that “Outer Space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means”.<sup>12</sup> It can be inferred that the space environment is free to be explored as long as those activities are conducted for the benefit of mankind and its interests, which includes peace and security. Furthermore, as Olavo Bittencourt explains,

(...) no State has the right, by any means, to claim Earth orbits or celestial bodies under its sovereignty, as if they were *res nullius*, opened to traditional methods of annexation, for instance, discovery or occupation.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from the space treaties, the 1986 Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space,<sup>14</sup> established guidelines to data obtained from Outer Space to Earth, which should be carried out in the interests of all countries and in accordance to International Law.

Jana Jentzsch explains that satellite remote sensing became an asset of “verification of treaties”,<sup>15</sup> which means that it monitors eventual breaches of International Law agreements, which includes human rights obligations. During the negotiations of the Remote Sensing Principles in the Legal Subcommittee of the COPUOS, the sovereignty issue was discussed several times because of the remote sensing activities regarding foreign territory.<sup>16</sup> Therefore EO and its data processing should be conducted based on the respect for the principle of full and permanent sovereignty of all States and peoples,<sup>17</sup> but also in attention to the Article II, OST.

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10 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

11 Outer Space Treaty, Article III.

12 Outer Space Treaty, Article II.

13 O. O. B. Neto, *Defining the Limits of Outer Space for Regulatory Purposes*, Strasbourg, Springer, 2015, 20.

14 1986 Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, 1986, Res 41/65, United Nations General Assembly.

15 J. Jentzsch, Use of Satellite Data for Treaty Monitoring, In M. Sánchez-Aranzamendi and K.U. Schrogl (Eds.), *Current Legal Issues for Satellite Earth Observation*, Vienna, European Space Policy Institute, 2010, 27-30.

16 G. Zhukov, Y. Kolosov, *International Space Law*, 2nd ed., Mockba, Ctaty, 2014, p. 138.

17 Remote Sensing Resolution, Principle IV.

Fabio Tronchetti explains that according to Principle XII,<sup>18</sup> a State can observe another State's territory "without previous request and authorization to do so", but the observed State, known as "sensed State" "shall have access to the data obtained from your territory in a non-discriminatory basis", which means "at a reasonable cost". Scholars have already noted that the data in question is not only the image captured from the observation but also the processed information resulted from the imagery collected.<sup>19</sup>

Frans von der Dunk observes that the Remote Sensing Resolution has become "part of international customary law" and therefore its contents are binding to all States.<sup>20</sup>

However, the main point of the present scientific work lies in the lack of regulation of those activities in a specific sense. Not only the Space Law treaties and conventions were elaborated in a moment in which the results of the technological evolution were not foreseeable, but also it was not imagined that the exploration of space activities would be conducted by non-state entities like nowadays. Moreover, the development was such that activities considered regular to armed forces – like surveillance – became important assets to civilians. As Joan Johnson-Freese exposes, the difference only rests in the "intent of use".<sup>21</sup>

George Cho explains that there is an "absence of regulation of private entities activities in the space exploration sector by Space Law";<sup>22</sup> however, State responsibility and liability are applicable to both subjects and actors of Space Law. According to Article VI, OST,

States Parties to the Treaty shall bear international responsibility for national activities in Outer Space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, whether such activities are carried on by governmental agencies or by non-governmental entities.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, those activities are covered by the legal system. The Remote Sensing's Principles X and XI set that the "remote sensing satellites shall promote the protection of Earth's natural environment and the protection of mankind from natural disasters".<sup>24</sup> In relation to human rights protections or

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18 F. Tronchetti, *Fundamentals of Space Law and Policy*, Strasbourg, Springer, 2013, p. 16.

19 Candelmo, Nardone, 2017, 87-113.

20 F. von der Dunk, *Legal Aspects of Geospatial data gathering in space*, *GIM International*, 19, 2005, 69-71.

21 J. J. Freese, *Space as a Strategic Asset*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 33.

22 G. Cho, *Privacy Conflicts from High Resolution Imaging*, *Current Legal Issues for Satellite Earth Observation*, Vienna, European Space Policy Institute, 2010.

23 Outer Space Treaty, Article VI.

24 Remote Sensing Resolution, Principles X and XI.

even treaty monitoring in this aspect, there is no mention. Still, the absence of a rule does not imply its prohibition especially when the activity in question harmonizes with the applicable law.

There is a need for regulation of space activities in the private sector, however, the fundamental principles of Space Law present in the *corpus iuris spatialis* and other instruments settled that the use and exploration of space must be peaceful and in accordance with mankind's interests and International Law, in order to maintain international security.

José Montserrat Filho points out that “space activities ought to be carried out according to International Law” – especially the UN Charter as the international security is a primacy also in Outer Space.<sup>25</sup>

The UN Charter highlights in its preamble the significance of human rights protections for all State parties.<sup>26</sup> Further, international security and peace issues are also outlined as important goals to all Member States of the UN.

The fact that Space Law was created due to conflicts between the United States and the former Soviet Union makes possible to acknowledge its military feature. During the 1950s, technical studies developed during Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration showed that the Outer Space had a military and strategic significance regarding Earth observation and remote sensing mechanisms.

The peaceful uses of those technologies and their scientific scope was emphasized by the American President at the time, as there were no legal standards to support those satellite activities in a practical sense.

Thus, if the international community deemed such activities lawful, the USA could gain important knowledge of its enemies' military assets and facilities without endangering the lives of pilots aboard spy aircraft – like the U-2 – which were threatened by anti-aircraft artillery even when flying at high altitudes.<sup>27</sup>

Although the threat of the use of force between the two space power Nations was imminent and the space environment could serve as a stage for this, there were efforts by States in order to guarantee its peaceful purposes, in the benefit of mankind.

The Outer Space Treaty clearly expresses its peaceful uses by providing for partial demilitarization of Outer Space in its Article IV.<sup>28</sup> Fabio Trochetti explains that this article

(...) explicitly prohibits the placing of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in orbit around the Earth, however, it is silent on, and therefore it does not preclude, other military uses of Outer Space.<sup>29</sup>

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25 J. M. Filho, *Direito e Política na Era Espacial: podemos ser mais justos no espaço do que na Terra?*, Rio de Janeiro, Vieira & Lent, 2007, p. 38.

26 Charter of the United Nations.

27 J. L. Gaddis, *História da Guerra Fria*, Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira, 2006, p. 70.

28 Outer Space Treaty, Article IV.

In sequence, it is mentioned in the second part of the same article that the Moon and other celestial bodies will be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes.

In a similar logic, the common benefit clause and the astronauts' protection clause reveal the peaceful character of the legal system and its concern for the human being.<sup>30</sup>

The common benefit clause is explicit to declare that the exploration and use of Outer Space must be for the benefit of mankind itself, with a view to the good and interest of all States. As A. Piradov considers, this principle should “serve as a guideline for space exploration and use by States”.<sup>31</sup>

The partial demilitarization clause, in fact, harmonizes with the proposition that the Outer Space should be used and explored with a view to the common good since it would not be possible to authorize the use of force in any manner inconsistent to the rules stated in the UN Charter, especially in an environment where cooperation between States is encouraged as a purpose of the progress of mankind.

In addition to the cooperation stimulated by the OST - which confirms the peaceful character of Space Law - it is possible to observe what Manfred Lachs describes as the humanitarian character of Space Law provisions, regarding the protection of astronauts.<sup>32</sup>

Article V of the OST gives astronauts the right to receive assistance in the event of an accident,<sup>33</sup> danger or forced landing on the territory of another State party or on the high seas, which is strengthened and extended in The Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (Rescue Agreement).<sup>34</sup>

The aforementioned provision recognizes specific rights to astronauts, ratifying the understanding that they are “sent from humanity” and, therefore, are entitled with guarantees upon return to Earth after performing their tasks.

The international protection of the person is a common objective of the States since it is established by international treaties, which focus on the

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29 F. Tronchetti, *The Applicability of Rules of International Humanitarian Law to Military Conflicts in Outer Space: Legal Certainty or Times for a change?*, IAC-12-E7.3,7,x14155, 63rd International Astronautical Congress, Naples, Italy, 2012, 1 – 5 October.

30 Outer Space Treaty, Article I.

31 A. S. Piradov, *International Space Law*, Honolulu, University Press of the Pacific, 2000, p. 33.

32 B. Cheng, *Studies in International Space Law*, Oxford, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1998, p. 6.

33 Outer Space Treaty, Article V.

34 The Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.



pacta sunt servanda as a binding principle of the parties to the content of these norms.<sup>35</sup>

The common benefit clause, the partial demilitarization of Outer Space and the duty imposed on States to assist astronauts, confirm the peaceful feature of Space Law.

Therefore, it is possible to acknowledge the use of Outer Space by technologies destined to verify possible violations of human rights, especially through satellites, with the production and collection of images. Thus, it is possible to identify Space Law as an instrument of treaty monitoring in light of human rights protections, as in the case of satellite uses by the SSP, which assists in investigations regarding the commission of international crimes.

Therefore, the production, collection, and analysis of data obtained from the SSP's operations are conducted in perfect harmony to the Space Law system.

The evidentiary support obtained from SSP's images and reports before the International Criminal Court demonstrates that the use of new technologies in the legal proceedings has been strengthening the human rights protection systems because it reinforces the investigations and prosecutions by the expression of narratives that involve human rights violations.

The lack of specific regulation must not be disregarded as an agenda before the space community, however, the harmonic dialogue between sources of International Law and Space Law along with the positive impact of space assets before legal proceedings evidence the transcendent importance of the support of such mechanisms before the international community and suppresses any doubts and concerns that might appear regarding the examined topic.

#### **4. Remote sensing images as documentary evidence of human rights violations**

After the elucidation of the SSP's positive impacts in the Sudan situation before the ICC and the presentation of the legal landscape that surrounds the documentation of human rights violations by satellites, it is indispensable to make a reflection about the use and admissibility of those images and reports before international courts.

Lindsay Freeman reasons "(...) aerial and satellite images (...) and other electronic records are considered documentary evidence and are valued as paper evidence".<sup>36</sup>

The admissibility of evidence in international courts is not universal-regulated. Each court deals with its own proceedings and procedures, therefore the analysis is done case-by-case.

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35 The Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties, Article 26.

36 L. Freeman, 2018, 283-336.

Robert Cryer exposes that the rules for International Criminal Tribunals are mostly set by precedent, but the reliability of evidence is valued according to its “origin, content, corroboration, truthfulness, and trustworthiness”.<sup>37</sup>

Several experts examined SSP’s records and images in order to demonstrate narrative and corroborate other pieces of evidence. Besides, the origin in accordance with Space Law principles and guidelines also reveals that satellite imagery and analyzed data are endowed with all the elements and requirements that configure reliable evidence.

Different courts and cases have already admitted satellite imagery as evidence in situations regarding human rights violations and international crimes.

The International Criminal Court had already dealt with satellite imagery before Sudan’s cases. In the situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Ngundjolo Chui’s case satellite images of attacks were used to demonstrate the configuration of the offensives that took place in the village of Bogoro.<sup>38</sup>

The International Court of Justice admitted satellite images in the case of Georgia versus the Russian Federation. Georgia used images produced with remote sensing technology to demonstrate the presence of Russian troops in Abkhazia and intentional burnings carried out by those forces in the region – which were documented by UNOSAT’s mechanisms.<sup>39</sup>

Eya Macauley mentions also the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s case Eritrea versus Ethiopia in which satellite imagery were used to corroborate witnesses’ testimonials about attacks during the border dispute between the two nations.<sup>40</sup>

The availability of data has been increasing in the last few decades and this information is confirmed by the cases presented, in which the facts and information were collected by atypical means. Several other NGOs and private entities have now access to open-source media and systems that may decrease the obstacles of the production of evidence by satellites.

Traditionally authorities and official members of courts and State institutions conduct investigations and production of evidence, however, the global civil society engaged in the protection and promotion of human rights. As a result, organizations like SSP have been acting independently and in cooperation with other companies and organs to strengthen legal proceedings from an evidentiary point of view.

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37 R. Cryer, H. Friman, D. Robinson, E. Wilmshurst, *An Introduction to International Criminal Law and Procedure*, 3rd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 468.

38 Confirmation of Charges Hearing, Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the case of the Prosecutor versus Germain Katanga and Mathieu Ngundjolo Chui, International Criminal Court, 02 July 2008.

39 Wang, Raymond, Gould, Baker, 2013, p. 1-18.

40 E. D. Macauley, The Use of EO Technologies in Court by the Office of the Prosecutor in the International Criminal Court, *In* R. Purdy, D. Leung (Ed.), *Evidence from Earth Observation Satellites*, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013, p. 217-240.

Human rights protection systems pursuit not only the eradication of international crimes but also accountability in order to prevent impunity.<sup>41</sup> The pillars in which SSP is sustained are clear: the actions must begin in the prevention of the attacks and then end in the prosecution of criminals.

Space assets and technologies are a closer reality in the 21st Century but this sector is still extremely expensive and complex, therefore the control and manipulation of remote sensing data are not that accessible especially when multiple shots and dynamic collection are necessary in order to present a consistent narrative.

The studied cases also make very clear the patent need for expertise and specialized work in order to guarantee reasonable standards for those pieces of evidence.

Evidence obtained from satellite images, therefore, demands the work of experts during the legal proceedings, which may also be necessary during trials before judges – and that certainly is an important step to guarantee that those pieces of evidence will be found reliable and admissible in investigations, prosecutions and, other judiciary procedures.

There are challenges and issues to overcome in this particular area like budget, specialized work, the complexity of manipulation, the need for dynamic acting, however, the help that those documents can provide is not only singular because of the narrative and the support during the proceedings but also because accurate images sometimes can show what other documents cannot.

International courts such as ICC and other tribunals that make part of the International Criminal Law system are sustained by the cooperation of its member States. Thus, their operations depend on the enforcement of State parties. Robert Cryer explains that cooperation is the heart of effective international criminal proceedings,<sup>42</sup> but this dependence presents difficulties, including the collection of evidence. By that, it is notable that the role of SSP and other private entities in legal proceedings is not only precious because of the positive impacts and results in the investigations and case-building proceedings, but because it complements the efforts in this cooperation process.

Questions and impasses appear whenever sensitive and relevant points are outlined. The law and its principles are instruments of harmonization and protection of its subjects and therefore they must be able to embrace topics that fall within its scope. The documentation of human rights violations by satellites is a matter of Space Law, International Criminal Law and, International Law that also impacts in procedural issues. The composition of

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41 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Preamble.

42 Cryer, Friman, Robinson, Wilmshurst, 2014, p. 469.

all those variables makes clear that remote sensing images as evidence are admissible and lawfully collected and processed.

## **5. Conclusions**

Space technologies have revolutionized the way of living in the international community and most of those impacts accrue from satellite uses. The benefits that the world had and has from those assets are countless, such as the assistance in the human rights protection systems.

The Satellite Sentinel Project and its creators certainly sought to provide humanitarian assistance to several victims of atrocities in Sudan, however little did they know that their activities could take an important part in important accountability mechanisms, focused in preventing impunity of heinous acts of violence.

Situations and ongoing cases before the International Criminal Court, for instance, are extremely complex especially from the evidentiary point of view as International Criminal Law and the Rome Statute set high standards upon ICC's legal proceedings and procedures. For this reason, the coordination of satellite images with other pieces of evidence in the investigations and in the construction of narratives was key to bring consistency to the cases. Additionally, the manifest need for cooperation in those proceedings to gather evidence is settled by the efforts combined from the global civil society.

There are several challenges and issues to overcome in such activities, which demand specialized skills, dynamic and cooperative efforts, organized budget, thorough analysis, however, the satellite images used before legal proceedings fortify the production of evidence as they corroborate and enlighten questions that sometimes are harder by other means.

From the perspective of human rights protection by non-state entities networks, the Satellite Sentinel Project and the documentation of human rights violations by satellites represent important steps towards a more effective action in the prevention and accountability of international crimes.

Treaty monitoring is undoubtedly a significant mechanism as it supports international security and reinforces the primacy of obligations assumed from States in subjects like human rights protections.

However, in view of legal instruments, the situation is still not ideal because the establishment of specific rules and principles to support this specific data and evidence collection could result in significant progress in this area, especially when it comes to rules of procedure. Nevertheless, the dialogue between the principles and rules of Space Law and International Law surpasses any doubts regarding the lawfulness and admissibility of those pieces of evidence.

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The prevention and eradication of human rights violations especially in serious situations like in Sudan do not represent only an accomplishment for victims and local authorities but also for all subjects who value international security and peace.

The rules and principles of Space Law not only allow the documentation of evidence regarding human rights violations by satellite means from non-state organisms, but they also deem those mechanisms lawful. From the International courts' proceedings landscape, is possible to affirm that those pieces of evidence are admissible and important assets in the accountability for human rights violations.