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Contribution of Space Activities to Solving Global Societal Issues (2)

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REMOTE SENSING AS A FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ASSISTANCE

**Abstract**

Remote sensing data collected from private satellites may be used to support the understanding of global humanitarian crises by making imagery of such crises available to the general public. Much like the way that social media has revolutionized reporting and information transfer, images of destroyed villages and troop movements may force political pressure on states to act in cases where previously such pressure did not exist.

Thanks to companies like DigitalGlobe, Google SkyBox, and PlanetLabs, data is more accessible than ever. Now, even in once remote corners of the globe, satellite imagery is making it possible to establish facts about atrocities committed on the ground. As recently as January of this year, satellite images were used to confirm demolition of entire villages in Nigeria by militants. In Syria - a location where it is difficult to independently verify news - satellite images showed the breadth of damage to World Heritage Sites. In that regard, satellites provide a new, and perhaps more compelling, tool for bringing destruction to light.

This paper analyzes the use of satellite imagery to recognize humanitarian violations, and how, once detected, the data can be effectively used in the most impactful manner to rally a well-tailored international response to aid otherwise-isolated regions.