



HIU Highlights Report No.6: October 1-November 30, 2004

The Humanitarian Information Unit serves as a USG interagency center to identify, collect, analyze, and disseminate unclassified information in preparation for and response to complex emergencies worldwide, and to promote best practices for humanitarian information management

This report describes select initiatives underway, recent collaborations, key meetings, and upcoming items of interest.

HIU Website:

The HIU has set up a prototype website designed to provide partners with access to HIU reports, maps, and updates of current and recent HIU initiatives. The unclassified, password-protected website will be refined over time and your suggestions are welcome. (POC: Tiffany Hill)

The website is available at: <http://hiu.state.gov>

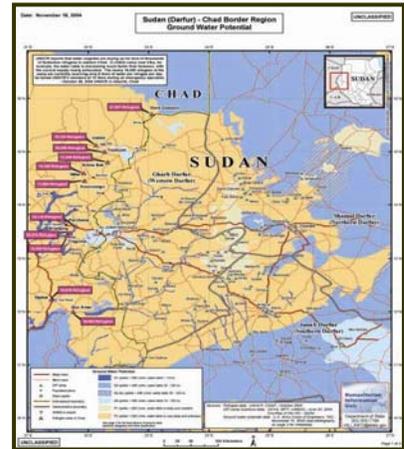
User name: User12

Password: password

Status of Select Initiatives:

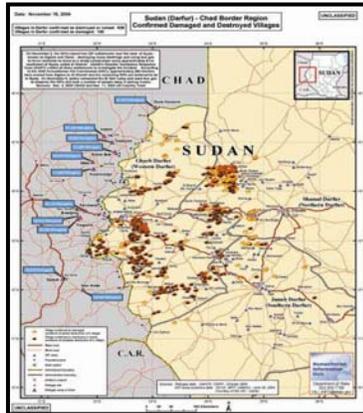
Efforts Relating to Sudan:

Based on a request from the National Security Council (NSC), the HIU created a map (see map at right) displaying the locations of ground water with respect to refugee and IDP populations in western Sudan (Darfur) and eastern Chad. Refugee and IDP camp locations were provided by UNHCR, hydrologic data from the US Army Corps of Engineers, and baseline data from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). The map is available on the HIU website. In response to another request from the NSC, the HIU created a GIS-product entitled "USAID Priority Sites for IDP Protection in Darfur". The product was shared with the U.S. Chief of Staff of the military assistance group that is collaborating with the African Union monitoring force deployed in Darfur. (POC: Dennis King and David Springer)



Collaborating with UNHCR's Geneva-based Geographic Information Management Unit, the HIU enhanced high-resolution commercial satellite images of three Sudanese refugee camps in

eastern Chad (Mille, Iridimi, and Farchana), by delineating camp parameters, tent groupings, and management structures by superimposing grid lines and latitudes/longitudes. HIU sent the products to UNHCR in Geneva to be shared with UNHCR field staff for their use and feedback. (POC: David Springer)



The latest in a series of HIU maps on Darfur's Damaged and Destroyed Villages was updated on November 15, 2004. The map product of the Sudan/Chad border region (see map to the left) is also available on our website.

AAAS Public Discussion on Darfur: The Role of Science in a Humanitarian Crises

This event provided the scientific community with an opportunity to learn more about the current situation in Darfur and the role science can play in human rights and humanitarian emergencies.

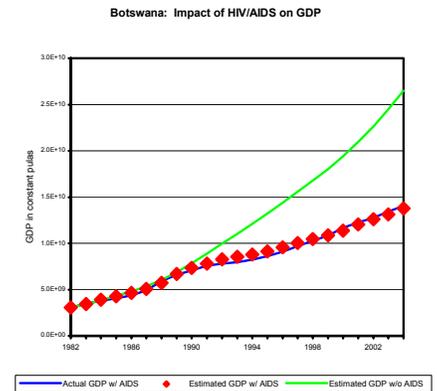
USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios made the keynote address and the HIU's David Springer made a presentation on the use of satellite imagery in Chad and Sudan. Audios of the presentations are available at <http://shr.aaas.org/darfur/index.shtml>.

Population at Risk Information (P@RI) Project:

The P@RI Project is a HIU-led interagency initiative stemming from recognition that the USG needs a better capacity to estimate sub-national populations in crisis-prone countries. P@RI is in the process of transitioning from the conceptual phase to implementation. Due to the generous contributions from NASA, USAID/DCHA, and the Census Bureau, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) now has more than half of the funding necessary to launch a National Research Council (NRC) study to evaluate the means and methods of estimating sub-national demographic data and to recommend appropriate decision-making tools and methodologies in order to more effectively assist populations at risk. The HIU is currently in discussions with a variety of agencies to secure the balance of funds needed for the NAS/NRC study. This component of the overall project complements another, which involves the development of prototype country decision support packages that make better use of more accurate sub-national demographic information in responding to crises situations. The HIU, in collaboration with the NGA, took significant steps in November to identify a mechanism for sub-contracting the development of such support models. Additionally, the HIU has been working with contacts in Mozambique, Mali, and Haiti – three countries selected for the initial country packages - for support to this project component, including data collection and scenario development. (POC: Lewis McCulloch)

The Economic Impact of HIV/AIDS:

The HIU is in the initial stages of a long-term project to estimate the economic impact of HIV/AIDS in the countries selected under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The HIU is developing econometric models of what each country's GDP has been with AIDS and would have been without AIDS. The models may prove capable of forecasting the future impact of AIDS and of intervention efforts. To date, the HIU has modeled Botswana, Mozambique, and Uganda. The chart at the right shows the serious loss of economic output that Botswana has suffered because of AIDS. The loss is so large that per capita income has also suffered. Modeling assistance and helpful comments were received from individuals at USDA/ERS, INR/R, USAID, the World Bank, and the Futures Group. (POC: David Dodson)



Collaboration Efforts:

HIV/AIDS Health Management Information Systems Conference:

HIU team members (supported by the office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator – S/GAC) participated in the November 11-15 HIV/AIDS Health Management Information Systems Conference in Zambia, providing examples of the use of GIS as a tool for health information management. Conference attendees were primarily USG HIV/AIDS project management officials and their technical staff stationed overseas in PEPFAR focus countries. At the conference, HIU representatives underscored the importance of geo-referencing information as a standardized reporting requirement within S/GAC 2005 country plans. These data will facilitate the production of maps showing the location of S/GAC activities in 15 countries. (POC: Kathleen Miner and Deborah Belsky)

GEOInt 2004 Conference:

The HIU participated in the GeoInt 2004 Conference held in New Orleans October 12-15. This conference was sponsored by the United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation and allowed the HIU to learn more about new emerging geospatial technologies. Participants heard perspectives on future geospatial efforts from former CIA Director George Tenet; NGA Director retired Air Force Lt. Gen. James R. Clapper Jr., and the National Security Agency (NSA) Director, Air Force Lt. Gen. Michael V. Hayden. (POC: Tiffany Hill)

Other Items of Interest:

HIU Staff Retreat:

The HIU staff gathered at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) on November 9th for their annual retreat to discuss future programming plans and initiatives. These discussions will help form the basis of a multi-year HIU Strategic Plan and Results Framework.

HIU Briefings for USAID/OFDA and USAID/PPC:

On November 10th, the HIU met with Ken Isaacs, the new director of USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) within USAID’s Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) to brief him on HIU activities. OFDA funds a GIS specialist on the HIU team.

On November 16th, the HIU met with Charles North, the Director of the Office of Policy Planning within USAID’s Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC), and select members of his team to describe HIU activities underway.

ITCCB Approval:

The State Department’s Information Technology Commission and Control Board (ITCCB) approved the Department-wide accreditation of Environmental Systems Research Institute Inc. (ESRI) ArcGIS, ArcIMS, and ArcSDE software on its OpenNet system. This action, sponsored by the HIU, enables the State Department and US Embassies abroad to use and create GIS products and websites – an important step forward.

Upcoming HIU Executive Steering Committee (ESC) Meeting:

The next ESC meeting (invitation only) is scheduled for 10:00 AM on Thursday, February 17th, 2005 at the HIU.

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