

STAR WARS[®]

ROLEPLAYING GAME

THE FIRST TO STRIKE **EPISODE V OF *STAR WARS: DAWN OF DEFIANCE***

OWEN K.C. STEPHENS



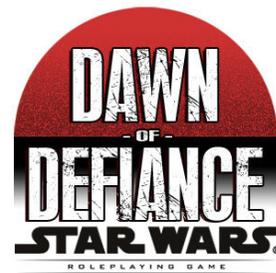
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THE FIRST TO STRIKE

The First to Strike is the fifth adventure in the *Dawn of Defiance* campaign, which will take heroes from 1st level all the way through 20th level in a continuous storyline designed to give both players and Gamemasters a complete *Star Wars Roleplaying Game: Saga Edition* experience. This adventure is the midpoint of the overall campaign and represents a shift from investigating to actually taking on Imperial forces—and winning. Though a series of rough and action-filled encounters, the heroes should advance to 11th level by the conclusion of the adventure. Over the course of this adventure, the heroes will free a planet from Imperial tyranny, become allies with some of that planet's leaders, and discover that the trail to the Sarlacc Project leads right into the heart of the Empire—to Coruscant itself.



WHAT IS DAWN OF DEFIANCE?

Dawn of Defiance is the name given to a series of 10 linked adventures that Gamemasters can use to create an entire campaign for their players. Set in the months after the events of *Revenge of the Sith*, the adventures in the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign are designed to provide players and GMs with the iconic *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* experience, set against the backdrop of the tyranny of the Galactic Empire. The **Dawn of Defiance** campaign takes the heroes all the way from 1st level up to 20th level and features an ongoing storyline that progresses over the course of the campaign. Each adventure can also be played individually and should provide the heroes with ample challenges to gain two levels per adventure. Gamemasters should feel free to use the **Dawn of Defiance** adventures either as an entire campaign or as fillers for their own home campaigns.

If you are a Gamemaster wishing to run the campaign, read the GM's Primer, which summarizes the overall plot of the campaign and the events of each adventure. The GM's Primer is available at the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* Web site (www.wizards.com/starwars). The site also features other articles related to the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign, including the official campaign standards and an FAQ.

Warning! If you will be playing in a Dawn of Defiance campaign or in a campaign using its adventures, read no further.

Some rules mechanics are based on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* Saga Edition by Christopher Perkins, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Rodney Thompson; the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson; and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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ADVENTURE SUMMARY

After weeks of meditation and study, Master Denia once more calls the heroes together with news. The meditation techniques she learned from the holocron have proven to be helpful, and she believes that she has located the home planet of the slaves the heroes rescued in *The Queen of Air and Darkness*. After consulting the Force, she believes that the alien slaves were in fact Nazren, a species from Nizon, an obscure planet in the Maldrood Sector.

A special request by Senator Organa to the University of Aldera revealed only that the planet Nizon is a barren world in the Centares System. It lies near Centares, an industrial world occupied by the Empire from which Imperial forces have been withdrawing for some months now. Captain Verana has managed to locate Nizon in his navcomputer and is willing to share the coordinates with the heroes if they agree to investigate the world.

ARRIVAL

When the heroes arrive in the Centares System, they discover an Imperial presence not so lessened as they would like to believe. A *Victory II*-class Star Destroyer floats in orbit, and a number of smaller capital ships and corvettes dot the space above Nizon. As the heroes arrive, they witness a transport ship (similar to the slave ship from *The Queen of Air and Darkness*) leave Nizon's orbit and jump to hyperspace for parts unknown. Slipping past the Imperial Navy will not be easy; the heroes are fired upon for violating Imperial space. To make matters worse, the space around Nizon is filled with fragmentary asteroids, known as rogue fragments, that pose a constant danger to anyone without access to the tracking information being broadcast from the planet's surface.

After the heroes land (or crash) on Nizon, it soon becomes clear that their help is sorely needed. Nizon is a barren world covered in dirty red clay with powerful gusts of wind. The gales kick up dust storms that make the planet barely habitable, and the heroes are required to wear breath masks to filter out the dust. The Nazren's only major city lies not far from the heroes' vessel and should be a natural place for them to begin their search for information.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Inside the city, the heroes discover that Imperial oppression is alive and well on Nizon; stormtroopers march down the streets, an AT-ST walks around the wider avenues, and V-wing starfighters scream overhead every now and again. The Nazren themselves, hulking beings comparable in size to Wookiees, lumber through the streets with their shoulders hunched and their eyes downcast, but a smoldering look of hatred boils just below their stoic surfaces. In addition to the Nazren and the Imperials, Trandoshan slavers prod groups of Nazren along or gather at the entrances to buildings, eyeing the Nazren like farmers eyeing cattle. Other species are present in the city, too, allowing the heroes to move through the streets without being accosted at every turn.

The heroes eventually make contact with Sartok, the leader of an underground resistance movement. The Nazren have been planning to overthrow their Imperial masters for a while, but thus far, Sartok has been unable to convince enough of his people that it is possible to defeat the Empire and reclaim their world. After learning of the heroes' previous successes against the Empire, Sartok pleads with them to help him reclaim the capital city, which should inspire his people to continue their rebellion. If the heroes agree, he fills them in on his plans.

RESISTANCE

When Sartok gives the word, his allies throughout the city begin to riot. The heroes tackle a number of encounters during the riots that aid the Nazren in their struggles to reclaim their capital. They must help capture an Imperial checkpoint, rescue Nazren children trapped in a collapsing building, stop Trandoshan slavers from herding frightened Nazren onto their space ship, and so on. The critical battle of the revolt takes place in Martyr's Plaza, which contains the entrance to the planetary control center, which runs all global communications as well as the rogue fragment tracking station.

Moreover, the heroes face one other unforeseen challenge: a bounty hunter. Inquisitor Valin Draco posted a bounty on the heroes after their last encounter, and a Zabrak named Vril Vrakth has been on their trail for a few weeks. Having learned about Senator Organa's request to the University of Aldera, Vrakth has set himself up on Nizon as a scout for the Imperials and the slavers, but the heroes are his true prey. The bounty hunter plans to capture the heroes and kill Sartok, who also has a bounty on his head (though his is "dead or alive"). Vrakth has crab droids from the Clone Wars crawling through the city, reporting anything they find and attacking his prey when possible. If the heroes don't deal with him prior to their capture of the control center, they must face Vrakth outside the city, at a planetary defense battery being installed by the Empire.

CONCLUSION

With the capital city securely in the hands of the Nazren rebels, word begins to come in that Nazren in other settlements have begun their own uprising. Meanwhile, the heroes gain access to an Imperial intelligence datachip that was entrusted to Vril Vrakth. From this datachip, they learn that the Nazren slaves were used as a part of the Sarlacc Project, and that every so often, the slaves were executed to keep them from spreading word of the project. Additionally, the datachip indicates that the orders regarding the Sarlacc Project originate from Coruscant, which is also referred to as the home of the project's designers and architects. Thus, the best source of information on the Sarlacc Project seems to be one of the most heavily guarded planets in the galaxy. With this knowledge in hand, the heroes return to the *Resurgence*.

WHAT YOU NEED

The First to Strike is designed for use with the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Saga Edition Core Rulebook* and *Starships of the Galaxy*. However, *Starships of the Galaxy* is relevant only for the first combat encounter (in Part 2: Into the Jaws) and even so, it's not absolutely necessary. The encounter uses ships and rules from that book, but this adventure includes enough of the rules to allow you to run the encounter without having a copy of *Starships of the Galaxy*. The adventure doesn't reproduce all of the ship statistics referenced, but it provides suggestions for replacements.

OPENING CRAWL

If you wish to have an opening crawl before the adventure, consider using the boxed text on the next page.

STAR WARS: DAWN OF DEFIANCE

Episode V

THE FIRST TO STRIKE

It is a time of rebellion in the galaxy. Members of the Alderaanian resistance have won a major victory against the Empire, and more battles are close at hand.

The Empire's mistreatment of non-Humans continues throughout the galaxy, as Wookiees, Mon Calamari, and other species are forced to work as slaves on Imperial projects.

Aboard the *Resurgence*, Master Denia has peered into the Force and discovered another group of oppressed beings, ones who might hold the key to unlocking the mystery of the Sarlacc Project . . .

PART 1: WHISPERS IN THE FORCE

Some weeks after their last mission, Denia asks the heroes to come speak to her about things they have encountered before, especially the slave ship from *The Queen of Air and Darkness*. After seeing to their needs and seating them comfortably, she speaks to the heroes.

"Thank you for coming. I know that you have many demands on your time.

"As I had hoped, my training with the holocron has proven very useful, and I thank you again for your assistance in recovering it. With its aid, I have deepened and lengthened my meditations and have begun to understand the glimpses I receive with greater accuracy. Unfortunately, the galaxy is filled with great suffering, and the cries of whole worlds oppressed come through the Force most clearly.

"In particular, I have been hearing cries for help from what I believe to be the homeworld of the slaves you freed from the Imperials. Having seen and heard them more clearly, I now believe these prisoners were Nazren, a species from Centares, an obscure system in the Malrood Sector. I passed this information to Senator Organa, and he sent a few discreet inquiries to Aldera University.

"It seems that the Nazren are a species from outside the Empire. They never joined the Republic and thus have no representation in the Senate. The Empire has a small force on the mining planet Centares, the third world in the Centares System, but has been reassigning those ships for some weeks. The Nazren are native to Nizon, the fifth planet in the system. Since the Empire has no official interest in Nizon, it seems likely that they have made raids on Nizon for slave labor, perhaps originally to run the mines on Centares. But they might have left some records or clues on Nizon about the Sarlacc Project. Also, the people of Nizon might make useful allies if the Empire has mistreated them.

"Though there is little information about Centares or Nizon in our records, Captain Verana has managed to locate hyperspace coordinates for Nizon in his navcomputer. He's willing to share them with you—if you're willing to travel there. I ask that you take a trip to Nizon and investigate its treatment at the hands of the Empire. Proof of Imperial depredations might give Senator Organa additional influence in the Senate, and if the Nizon are interested in opposing the Empire on a widespread basis, we might be able to assist them."

After speaking to Denia, the heroes are likely to have numerous questions. Denia admits that she has few hard facts, but her sense through the Force is that the Nazren are suffering in a way that could be stopped, and that the heroes will find something worth their time. Here are some possible answers to questions that the heroes might ask.

- **Why don't you go yourself, or at least come with us?**
"Though this is one of the strongest visions I have had in my meditations, it is far from the only tremor I have sensed in the Force. I need to remain here for some weeks yet to meditate on these feelings and try to clarify them. Unfortunately, I feel that the threat—and the opportunity—on Nizon cannot wait for me to be ready. That's why I ask you, my trusted friends."
- **What is Centares or Nizon like?**
"We don't have much information about them. Both are apparently very dusty planets, and I can provide breath masks for any of you that don't already have them. There is a single mining operation on Centares, with no native life, and one major city on Nazren. That's all we know."
- **What kind of opposition are we likely to face?**
"The Empire has been removing its forces from Centares for some time; that much is clear through reports filed with the Senate. It has no official presence on Nizon, but I sense that some threat does lurk there. I can't give you more advice than this: Be cautious, and don't grow overconfident."
- **What's in it for us?**
Hopefully, by now you know your players well enough to know if they need more incentives than an opportunity for adventure and a chance to oppose the Empire. If they do need a financial motive, Denia provides one: "Senator Organa is willing to pay each of you 4,000 credits just for making the trip. If you find the information that I sense waits there, he will reward you for recovering that as well."



PART 2: INTO THE JAWS

The first arc of the adventure involves getting past Imperial forces and finding someone to talk to on Nizon. Stealth and speed will serve the heroes well.

THE CENTARES SYSTEM

The Centares system has seven planets. The first and second are a gas giant and a toxic ocean, respectively, and an asteroid belt separates them from the rest of the system. The third planet is Centares, the fourth is another gas giant, the fifth is Nizon, the sixth is barren, and the seventh is yet another gas giant. Fragments from the asteroid belt have spread throughout the system, such that several worlds (including Nizon) are surrounded by asteroid rings and clouds of dust and debris. The clouds are thickest as they reach the upper atmosphere of these worlds, wreathing them in dirty halos. The clouds are not solid, however, and a few thin pathways through them allow access to the planets.

When the heroes drop out of hyperspace in the Centares System, they find the Imperial presence not so much lessened as moved. There aren't many Imperial ships around Centares, which is the only official reason for anyone to be here. However, there is a surprising amount of activity around Nizon. Assuming that the heroes jumped out of hyperspace near Nizon (their ultimate destination), a DC 20 Use Computer check can pinpoint the ships that remain around Centares—a *Venator*-class Star Destroyer with a half complement of starfighters and its escorts, and two *Dreadnaught*-class heavy cruisers. The forces around Nizon are more extensive.

A band that is 40 squares thick (in starship scale) marks the dust field between the vacuum of space and the Nizon atmosphere. The *Arkanian Dragon*, a *Victory II*-class Star Destroyer, sits on the edge of that field, while the heroes' ship is 10 squares farther away. A patrol of four *V*-wings surrounds the *Arkanian Dragon*. A Gallofree Yards Medium Transport is beside the *Dragon*, but it jumps to hyperspace before the heroes can examine it closely. The *Arkanian Dragon* knows every ship that is scheduled to arrive, and the heroes aren't on that list.

The object for the heroes is to get past the *Arkanian Dragon* and below the planet's dust cloud, not to defeat a capital ship. If a player asks about the Star Destroyer's abilities, you should make it clear that the ship can't fly in a planetary atmosphere or land on a planet. The heroes' safest course is to get past the Imperial ship rather than risk having it chase them through open space or trace a hyperspace jump back to where they came from.

Getting past the ship is a CL 9 encounter. However, if the heroes decide to slug it out with a Star Destroyer toe to toe, the challenge level rises to 18 (the CL of the *Arkanian Dragon*).

Hyperspace fades, and the stars find their rightful positions again as you arrive in the Centares System, far enough from Centares to avoid any starship with sensors sharp enough to find you. A Message to Spacers broadcasts automatically, warning travelers to be cautious of rogue meteor fragments. You can see that the system has seven planets, many of which are ringed by fragments from a large asteroid belt between the second and third planets. Centares and Nizon sit within asteroids, too, but they're also cloaked by dust clouds. There's a lot of rock in nearby space.

Then all of your ship's sensors and warning alarms go off at once, and it's easy to see why. Between you and Nizon, emerging from the dust cloud that surrounds the world, is a Star Destroyer! It's an older, smaller model than the new *Imperial* class that the Empire is producing, but it's still a fully functional capital ship, with an escort of *V*-wing fighters. Having just escorted a transport ship (of a type you've seen before) out of Nizon's orbit, the Star Destroyer turns and heads toward you. The Imperial ship makes no effort to communicate with you, and its approach is direct—and hostile.

If the hero operating the ship's sensors makes a DC 20 Use Computer check, also read the following information.

Chatter over the transceiver reveals additional ships in the system. At least two other Star Destroyers are in orbit around Nizon, though nowhere near your position. Dozens of starfighters, mostly *V*-wings and *V-19 Torrent* models, are also in orbit around the planet. A few other ships, including bulk carriers and personal starships, are flying about in the planet's atmosphere, below the dust cloud.

At least one ship still orbits Centares, maintaining an Imperial presence there. From the sound of the chatter, it's another old Star Destroyer design, though perhaps a bigger design. Whatever it is, you don't want to be sitting in orbit if it decides to investigate.

THE ARKANIAN DRAGON

A *Victory II*-class Star Destroyer, the *Arkanian Dragon* controls access to space around Nizon. It is currently escorting a transport ship (similar to the slave ship from *The Queen of Air and Darkness*) out of the planet's orbit, at which point the transport jumps into hyperspace. The heroes' ship has no cover and no business being in the Centares System, so the *Arkanian Dragon* immediately orders them to stop and prepare to be boarded. Presumably, the heroes refuse.

This is likely the first time that the heroes have had to confront a Star Destroyer directly, so you should warn them of the danger of trying to defeat such a ship. It's also important for them to learn that the *Arkanian Dragon* can't land or operate in the atmosphere of Nizon. It's bound to the reaches of space, so if the heroes can get past the ship and through the dust cloud that surrounds the planet, they can escape its attentions. Doing so, however, requires the heroes to fight their way past the Star Destroyer and its complement of starfighters.

Sixteen of the *Arkanian Dragon's* *V*-wing fighters are deployed elsewhere around Nizon, out of range of this battle. Of the remaining eight, the captain of the Star Destroyer opts to keep four in reserve (in case the heroes are just a diversion) and sends four out after the heroes. Because the *V*-wings are receiving guidance from the tracking station in the capital of Nizon, they fly through the few safe routes in the dust cloud. Their erratic flying makes it clear that they have tracking information the heroes lack, although it has no effect on their movement rate. (Though they take no damage, the *V*-wings still spend 2 squares of movement for each square moved. See the Nizon Space sidebar on page 8.)

Rendili StarDrive *Victory II*-class Star Destroyer CL 18

Colossal (cruiser) capital ship
Init -2; **Senses** Perception +6

Defense Ref 14 (flat-footed 12), Fort 51; +12 armor, Vehicular Combat
hp 1,380; DR 20; SR 150; **Threshold** 251

Speed fly 2 squares (starship scale)

Ranged 4 heavy turbolaser batteries +14 (see below) and

Ranged 4 double turbolaser batteries +14 (see below) and

Ranged 2 heavy ion cannon batteries +14 (see below) and

Ranged 2 tractor beams +14 (see below)

Fighting Space 2×2 squares (starship scale); **Cover** total (crew)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +63

Abilities Str 92, Dex 14, Con —, Int 18

Skills Initiative -2, Mechanics +6, Perception +6, Pilot -2, Use Computer +6

Crew 5,200 (skilled); **Passengers** 2,040 (troops)

Cargo 6,107 tons; **Consumables** 4 years; **Carried Craft** 24 V-wings (16 deployed elsewhere in orbit), 5 *Lambda*-class shuttles, 15 AT-STs (deployed), 10 Juggernauts (deployed), various support vehicles

Hyperdrive ×1 (backup ×15), navicomputer

Availability Military; **Cost** Not available for sale

Heavy turbolaser battery (5 gunners)

Atk +14 (-6 against targets smaller than Colossal), **Dmg** 7d10×5

Double turbolaser battery (5 gunners)

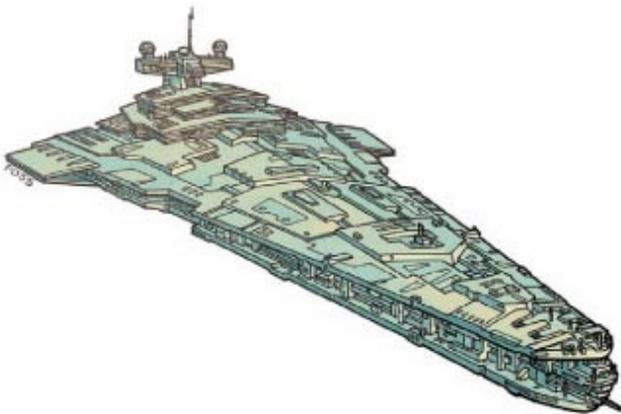
Atk +14 (-6 against targets smaller than Colossal), **Dmg** 4d10×5

Heavy ion cannon battery (5 gunners)

Atk +14 (-6 against targets smaller than Colossal), **Dmg** 4d10×5 ion

Tractor beam (5 gunners)

Atk +14 (-6 against targets smaller than Colossal), **Dmg** — (grapple +63)



Kuat Systems Engineering

Alpha-3 *Nimbus*-class V-wing Starfighter (4) CL 8

Huge starfighter

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +6

Defense Ref 15 (flat-footed 11), Fort 23; +3 armor, Vehicular Combat
hp 80; DR 10; SR 15; **Threshold** 33

Speed fly 16 squares (max. velocity 1,450 km/h), fly 6 squares (starship scale)

Ranged light laser cannons +6 (see below)

Fighting Space 3×3 or 1 square (starship scale); **Cover** total (crew), +5 (astromech droid)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +25

Atk Options autofire (light laser cannons)

Abilities Str 36, Dex 18, Con —, Int 14

Skills Initiative +8, Mechanics +6 (+13*), Perception +6, Pilot +8, Use Computer +6 (+13*)

**If the ship has an astromech droid, use these skill modifiers instead.*

Crew 1 plus astromech droid (skilled); **Passengers** none

Cargo 60 kg; **Consumables** 15 hours; **Carried Craft** none

Hyperdrive ×1 (with booster ring), 10-jump memory (astromech droid)

Availability Military; **Cost** 102,500 (45,000 used)

Light laser cannons (pilot)

Atk +6 (+1 autofire), **Dmg** 3d10×2



If possible, the Imperial forces use the V-wings to drive the heroes toward the *Arkanian Dragon*. The Star Destroyer is closer to the planet than the heroes' ship, but most likely it is significantly slower as well. That means it has to deal with the concealment granted by the dust cloud (see Features of the Area, below), so the closer it can get, the better. Although the heroes are unlikely to allow it, the *Arkanian Dragon* would like to get a tractor beam hit on the interloper. It has no fear of anything smaller than another capital ship, but it realizes that only a lucky shot is going to hit a smaller starship in a dust cloud.

Once the heroes' ship manages to travel 40 squares, they pass through the dust cloud and into the upper atmosphere of Nizon. The *Arkanian Dragon* can't follow them, and its sensors can't penetrate both the dust cloud and the atmosphere to target them. As the view of the Star Destroyer fades, surviving V-wings peel off as well, unwilling to continue operations without the *Dragon's* support (and unwilling to leave it without an escort in case the heroes are merely a distraction). The heroes can see that there is only one major city anywhere on the

surface of Nizon, and there's plenty of rocky wilderness around it where they can land and conceal their ship.

TOTAL VICTORY

Although unlikely, it's possible that the heroes—through great skill, great luck, or more firepower than the adventure is designed for—destroy the *Arkanian Dragon* and enough of its escorts to take control of the star system. If this happens, you as the GM have two basic options. First, you can run the adventure as written, but allow the PCs to use their starship as a weapon during the riots on Nizon. They can't bypass certain encounters (for example, finding Sartok is possible only on foot, and the Imperial ground troops don't evaporate just because their support ship is gone), but a functioning starship makes other encounters (such as the Battle for Martyr's Plaza) much less challenging.

Alternatively, you can have Imperial reinforcements arrive within a few hours of the *Dragon's* destruction. The Empire has been regularly moving material between a nearby industrial world and Nizon, and a missed hourly status check from the *Arkanian Dragon* can bring more Star Destroyers to secure the system. These starships can be as heavy and as numerous as you need to prevent the heroes from feeling confident enough to fly their ship around during the rioting. A *Venator*-class Star Destroyer (see page 148 of *Starships of the Galaxy*) and its escorts should be more than enough to get the most hardened aces to land and keep their ship under cover until the planet is secured (especially since they are unlikely to have defeated the *Arkanian Dragon* without suffering serious damage). Once the control center has been captured and the planet is in Nazren hands, any remaining Imperial space forces evacuate to carry word of the defeat back to Coruscant.

TOTAL DEFEAT

At the other extreme, if the *Arkanian Dragon* defeats the heroes, the adventure changes very little. If the heroes' ship is destroyed, inform the players that they have been shot down and crash outside a large city, and proceed with the adventure normally. If the heroes are captured, the *Dragon's* captain informs them that a bounty hunter is looking for them, and the Empire is inclined to turn them over. The heroes are placed in a detention camp, where Sartok finds and rescues them before asking for their help to free his world.

NIZON SPACE

The space around Nizon is filled with a thick cloud of dust and rogue asteroid fragments that can do serious damage to a starship with very little warning. Any ship that has access to the data from the rogue fragment tracking center (see the Battle for Martyr's Plaza, page 23) avoids taking damage but must use 2 squares of movement for each square traveled.

Ships without that information must make Pilot checks to avoid hitting a rogue fragment and taking damage. For every 5 squares (or fraction thereof) that a starship moves, its pilot must make a DC 15 Pilot check. On a failed roll, the starship collides with a meteor fragment and takes 4d6 + 20 points of damage. The dust clouds also cause poor visibility, granting all nonadjacent targets concealment.

These conditions exist in a band above Nizon's atmosphere that is 40 squares thick (in starship scale). If the heroes pass through the band, the *Arkanian Dragon* must let them go. Patrols will be sent looking for them, and the Star Destroyer will wait for them to leave the planet. For their sake, the heroes had better be able to give the ship other concerns to attract its attention.

LANDING SITE

Once the heroes are within Nizon's atmosphere, visibility clears up slightly. Any effort to scan the surface visually or listen to incoming communications reveals that there is only one major city on the whole planet. When the heroes begin to examine the city or look for a place to land, read the following text.

The city is a major metropolis, but it's also the only big city you find anywhere. You can see starship traffic, proving that the city has a spaceport—most likely, the only one on the planet. The city is built on a flat, rocky region between a large mountain and rough badlands of valleys and hills. There is construction on the mountain overlooking the city, but from here it's impossible to tell exactly what's being built.

Starship traffic is regular enough to suggest the presence of more than just Imperial forces and the local population. A few small freighters, manufactured by numerous different companies, are landing or taking off. Given that they lack any sign of Imperial markings or identification broadcasts, they are probably privately owned, meaning that at least a few members of other species will be found in the city, making it easier for you to move around there.

Though they are nowhere near you, you pick up transceiver broadcasts from patrols on the far side of the city. If you want your ship to remain undiscovered, you'll have to make some effort to conceal it once you land.

Critical Challenge: The heroes must prevent their ship from being spotted by Imperial ground patrols or V-wing flyovers. The high level of dust and poor visibility will help, but additional action is required.

Many caves and valleys can be used to conceal their ship, but getting into these locations is tricky at best. If the heroes' ship has crashed, the caves and valleys aren't an option. If the heroes land under their own power, they can try these difficult landing spots. A valley landing requires a DC 20 Pilot check and adds +5 to any check made to hide the starship. A DC 25 Pilot check allows the heroes to land deep in the back of a cave, which ensures that no one will find their starship for at least several days (which should cover the timeframe of the adventure). Characters might wish to rig some kind of tarp or wall to hide their starship, constructed from local material or appropriate camouflage they bring with them. Such efforts require a Mechanics check made to aid another on a Stealth check.

Any other attempt to conceal the ship, from covering it in scrub brush to landing it in a dark shadow, counts as a Stealth check. Note the total of the Stealth check. Each day, allow local patrols to make a Perception check with a +5 bonus. On any successful check, the starship is found and placed under guard (until the Empire is forced to withdraw from the system). In the first fight to take place on the day their ship is discovered, the heroes face one additional crab droid from Vrith Vrakth's forces. The crab droid carries something that it took from the heroes' ship, which was used by Vrakth to guess their plans.

Auxiliary Challenge: Nizon is an inhospitable planet. Visibility on the surface is limited, the native dust makes it difficult to breathe without assistance, and it's easy to get lost. Since the heroes are unlikely to have landed within sight of the city, they must make their way there from the outer reaches of the badlands without being spotted or getting lost. Doing this successfully requires a DC 15 Survival check. If one or more heroes does not have a breath mask of some kind, the DC of the Survival check increases by 5. On a failed check, the heroes either get lost or are forced to take cover from the worst of the dust, losing a day of travel time. This increases the chances that their starship is discovered and

that they'll encounter crab droids deployed by Vrakth. If the heroes take more than two days to reach the city, they run into one crab droid in the badlands each day until they make it to the city.

Auxiliary Challenge: Though inhospitable, Nizon is not lifeless. Tough and dangerous predators prowl the rough badlands and hunt the recessed valleys. The most dangerous of these is the blade scorpion, a massive creature that combines the worst traits of a crab and a spider. The Nazren fear these beasts and never travel alone in regions where they are common. The creatures are one reason that the bounty hunter Vrakth chooses to employ crab droids on the world.

Each day that the heroes are in the badlands (including their first day), make a Perception check with a +10 bonus against the worst Stealth check of any hero in the group. If the Perception check is higher, a blade scorpion picks up their scent and attacks. Use the statistics for an acklay (page 275 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*) to represent the creature. Instead of a bite attack, the blade scorpion makes a net attack (as if using the net ranged weapon).

THE CITY

The city of the Nazren has no name. None is needed, as it is the only settlement larger than a town on the entire planet. The Nazren refer to it as *ahdjok*, but this is nothing more than their word for "city," and the Empire hasn't bothered to assign it a name. Its position behind Mount Antas protects the city from the worst of the planetary dust, and it has a large, flat area on which to build a spaceport. As a result, the city has been the main point of contact between the Nazren and offworlders. It sits atop an underground river, which provides an endless supply of fresh water. This, combined with offworld trade, allowed the city to grow much larger than local agricultural conditions would otherwise permit. It is a traditional pilgrimage site for Nazren worldwide, making it a convenient location for the Empire to gather slaves.

The city is sprawling, with 10- to 15-story buildings crowded around wide streets and public fountains. Most of the city looks old, constructed of stone and natural caverns. Ancient statues of rock and ornate decorative carvings are worked into most buildings, and even the roads are paved with carved stones. More modern constructions can also be seen, mostly watch-posts bolted onto buildings or gates that block access to some streets. Posters, wanted signs, and recruitment fliers for the Empire have been plastered everywhere, ugly debris atop the city's natural charm.

Most of the creatures you see are obviously locals, the Nazren. None seem to carry weapons, not even something as crude as a knife or club. Their heads are generally downcast and their shoulders slumped, but whenever one glances at an Imperial poster or flyer, it looks up, and a flash of hatred shows briefly in its eyes.

Though much less common, aliens from dozens of worlds also walk through the streets. Most are followed by one or two Nazren carrying heavy bundles of goods. The aliens go by without comment and are diverse enough that you see no reason your own appearance should draw unwanted attention.

The Imperial presence here is also obvious. Stormtroopers in small groups patrol openly through the city, and in the distance you can hear the mechanical stomp of military walkers, though nothing as big as an AT-AT would fit in the streets.

Critical Challenge: Now that the heroes are in the city, they need to learn what's going on and what they can do about it.

The easiest option is to make a Gather Information check. A result of 10 to 14 reveals that the Empire took control of the city about a year ago and has been shipping Nazren off as slaves ever since, mostly with

Trandoshan slavers. It also reveals that any Nazren who resists the Empire is placed in a detainment camp in the center of town, and thus, most Nazren leaders are now in that camp.

A check result of 15 to 19 also reveals that many Nazren are prepared to fight back as soon as they receive a signal from Sartok, a Nazren leader recently arrested and thrown into the detainment camp. However, the Empire doesn't realize that Sartok is anyone special.

A check result of 20 or more also reveals that a bounty hunter named Vril Vrakth has recently arrived on Nizon with a collection of old crab droids. Most people think that Vrakth is hunting Sartok (which is true), but they note that he keeps asking about newcomers, and that he seems to have the aid of Imperial troops. Many believe that Vrakth is chasing an Imperial bounty on a non-Nazren target (which is also true; the Zabrak was hired by Inquisitor Draco to find the heroes).

A hero could also attempt to gain this information from an Imperial administrator or slaver by making a Deception or Persuasion check. For an administrator, use the statistics for an Imperial officer (page 280 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*), and for a slaver, use the statistics for a thug (page 284 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*). Such characters can give the same information as a DC 10 Gather Information check.

With a DC 20 Use Computer check, a hero can slice into the local datastreams and pick up broadcasts from Imperials and Nazren insurgents (with the same results as a DC 15 Gather Information check).

Auxiliary Challenge: The oppression the Nazren suffer is obvious, and patrols of stormtroopers march through the streets. At a dramatically appropriate point, the heroes see six heavy stormtroopers kick down the door of a building and drag a screaming Nazren mother out of the house. If the heroes do nothing, the mother is hauled off, and the cries of a Nazren child can be heard within the structure.

If the heroes fight the stormtroopers, the real challenge is to be fast and quiet. If the heroes defeat the stormtroopers silently or in 1 or 2 rounds, no one reports the fight. If the fight is noisy and lasts for 3 or more rounds, someone calls more stormtroopers. A squad of six more arrives in 2 minutes, a group of 12 arrives in 5 minutes, and an AT-ST arrives in 10 minutes.

If the heroes manage to keep mother and child together, give them 200 XP as a bonus. If they make sure that the child is cared for after the mother is taken, give them only 100 XP. If the mother is saved, she says that Sartok will wish to talk to the heroes, but she is too fearful to answer questions about the resistance leader, other than to choke out "detainment camp." She then runs off to go into hiding.

THE NAZREN

Nazren are tall humanoids, approximately the same height as Wookiees, but broader at the shoulders and narrower at the hip, with longer arms and torsos but shorter legs. They are hairless, with thick skin that has a heavy hide or leather look. They are brown to light yellow in color, a natural camouflage for their dust-bowl world. The head of a Nazren has no nose and is flatter than a Human's. A prominent brow ridge protects their eyes, and a series of small knobs start at the back of the head and run down to a visible spine.

Nazren wear sleeveless tunics tucked into black hide pants and heavy boots. Their clothes are normally fastened with hooks or clamps on the end of short lengths of cord or attached belts. Pads that strap onto the shoulders (to cushion a heavy load) and arm bracers are common, also attached with the hook system.

PART 3: INSURRECTION

Eventually, it should be clear to the heroes that their best chance to help the Nazren and gain information about the Imperial forces is to rescue Sartok from the detention camp. The camp is easy to find because it takes up the center of town, which used to be an open market before the Empire shut it down. The heroes' attack on the camp is critical to the rest of the adventure. It is a challenge that can be overcome only through battle—an important evolution from the stealth and investigation of the early stages of the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign to the beginning of open opposition to the Empire. It is also where the heroes first encounter Sartok, who will guide them in the rest of the adventure.

If the heroes don't seem inclined to free Sartok from the detention camp, you might need to encourage them.

- If they have befriended any GM character in the city, that character can be grabbed and thrown into the camp.
- If they are focused on finding and stealing information from the Empire, let them overhear that a data slicer working for Sartok was thrown in the camp. Once the heroes get inside, they find only Sartok, who promises to share the slicer's information if the heroes help with the coming riots.
- If they seem worried about particular Imperial forces (such as the AT-STs), let them see those forces head out to patrol several hours away from the city, creating a window of opportunity.
- If they think that the Nazren in the camp are safe, at least temporarily, have stormtroopers start to post execution times for the next day.

If the heroes attack the camp, run "The Breakout" (see page 14 for more information on the encounter). If they simply refuse to get involved, Sartok escapes on his own after a few days and seeks the heroes to propose an alliance between them. In that case, skip "The Breakout" and proceed with "Nurturing a Revolt."

WHAT IF THE HEROES GET CAPTURED?

If the heroes are captured at any point during *The First to Strike*, they are stripped of weapons and equipment and thrown into the detention camp. Feel free to let them try to escape on their own. If that fails, a Nazren decides to aid them—either Sartok (if he is alive) or another Nazren leader (if Sartok has been killed). The Nazren manages to deliver the heroes' weapons and gear by concealing them in a tattered, smelly cloak and then getting himself thrown into the detention camp. If the heroes don't already have something similar, the Nazren also brings an explosive charge to blow through the camp gate.

NURTURING A REVOLT

If the heroes allow Sartok to lead them to his safe cavern, the resistance leader picks up a few cached belongings and asks his guests to sit comfortably. At this point, Sartok is dressed as humbly as any Nazren, but he carries a satchel over one shoulder, in which he keeps a hidden blaster. The second and fourth fingers are missing from his left hand, and he has numerous scars, including some across his face. He is darker brown than most Nazren, with lighter splotches of skin at his wrinkles and creases. As an older member of his species, he has seen much that he'd rather not have witnessed.

If the heroes have any pressing needs (such as treating serious injuries), Sartok helps see to them before speaking.

Sartok makes a quick sweep of the cavern, checking to ensure that it has not been disturbed. Apparently satisfied, he crouches by the simple fire and motions for you to sit. He takes a few long breaths, then turns and speaks to you.

"My world is enslaved, and we have come to realize that no negotiation or appeal to reason can free us. The only way we shall regain control of Nizon is to take it back by force, which requires us to face the weapons and training of the Empire. That battle must begin here—all other settlements look to us for inspiration and leadership. For the sake of our world, we must take up arms against our oppressors.

"The cost shall be high for my people, but they are eager to pay it. The cost for remaining slaves would be higher, and it would be paid by our children and our children's children. If you will help us, we are ready to throw off the yoke of tyranny, even if we lose our lives. Liberty is too precious to sell for the chance of quieter, safer lives under the dark shadow of oppression.

"I have allies throughout the city who are ready to raise arms against the Empire at my signal. We are not a warlike people, but the stormtroopers have shown us the basics of violence, and we have learned the lesson well. Against soldiers, I have no doubt that my people would fight bravely with a fair chance at victory. But the Imperial forces have vehicles—large, metal, two-legged machines of war—that we cannot face. My people fear these machines, and though many would still fight bravely, too many would wait to see if we could topple them. Such an attack would be staggered and lose too much of its impact. Only if many of us take up arms at once can we overthrow our oppressors.

"But you are outsiders, and to be standing here, you must have opposed the Empire's machines successfully. Many of my less confident allies believe that with your aid, even the walking war machines could not stop us. This would give them the confidence to bring enough forces to bear at once. If we can take control of the planetary shields and turbolasers that they have nearly finished building on Mount Antas, we can complete those structures ourselves and use them to defend against further Imperial attack. The first step in such an attack is a citywide riot, which I am prepared to trigger.

"I know this world is not yours, that our people are not your people. But if you will aid us, you will always have a place of honor among the Nazren."

Obviously, this is a big step, and the heroes probably have numerous questions. Below are answers to some likely questions.

- How did the Empire seize control?**
 "They came as friends, claiming that we were in danger of being attacked by Separatists who wished to use our world as a secret base. The Empire landed troops and built barracks. Then, after they had more weapons than we did, they took over the city and the mountain and begin shipping our people off like cattle."
- What are you planning to do during the riot?**
 "I have every intention of fighting by your side. I can guide you around the city and ensure that your help goes where it is needed the most. I would not ask you to take any risk that I am unwilling to take myself."
- How many Nazren will join you?**
 "Dozens at first, then hundreds, and then, I believe, thousands. Eventually, we might be able to bring the whole world into the fight."
- Where does the Empire keep its important records?**
 "They might be in the control center below Martyr's Plaza. It houses our most advanced computer system, which tracks major rogue fragments in orbit. The Empire currently controls it and thus flies safely in our skies. Another possible location is the construction site on Mount Antas. It is heavily guarded, but if we take the city, the Empire will be forced to move many soldiers into the streets, leaving the site more vulnerable."
- How will you prevent the Empire from returning and taking over again?**
 "If we regain control of the tracking station, we can ensure that the Empire's ships are threatened by space debris and that only our allies can safely fly near our world."

If the heroes reject Sartok's request for help, the resistance leader still gives the signal for his people to riot, thus allowing the adventure to continue. However, the Nazren are brutally suppressed and treated even more harshly by the Imperials. Regardless of whether the heroes agree to help Sartok, the next encounter is Checkpoint Gamma (page 16).

SARTOK

Sartok has spent the past few months sneaking around the city, hiding Nazren who are in trouble with the Empire, keeping his people's spirits up, and planning a revolt to drive the Imperials out. Unfortunately, he's not a natural leader. The Nazren have come to respect him because he has defied the Empire and survived, but he's managed that mostly through stealth and luck. Sartok knows that the will of his people is ebbing, and they need a major victory to restore their faith in the struggle for independence.

Sartok

CR 7

Medium Nazren scoundrel 3/scout 4

Force 4

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +16

Languages Basic, Dosh, Nazren

Defense Ref 19 (flat-footed 19), Fort 19, Will 21

hp 57; **Threshold** 24

Speed 6 squares

Melee vibroblade +6 (2d6+5)

Ranged blaster pistol +5 (3d6+3)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +6

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Sneak Attack +1d6

Special Actions Fool's Luck, Hidden Movement, Improved Stealth, Quick Draw

Abilities Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10

Special Qualities Nazren resilience

Talents Fool's Luck, Hidden Movement, Improved Stealth, Sneak Attack

Feats Improved Damage Threshold, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Deception +8, Initiative +8, Gather Information +8, Perception +16, Persuasion +8, Stealth +13 (may reroll)

Possessions blaster pistol, vibroblade, comlink

Nazren Resilience—Once per encounter, when a Nazren would be moved down the condition track by taking damage equal to or exceeding the Nazren's damage threshold, the Nazren may reduce the number of steps moved down the condition track by 1 (minimum 0 steps).

THE RIOTS

Sartok allows the heroes as much time as they need to prepare before sending the word to begin the uprising. Once he does, however, things start to move very quickly. The riots are a series of several encounters that can occur in any order, with one exception. "Point Gold" (page 25) must be the final encounter of the adventure, as it signals the end of the Imperial dominance of Nizon.

Sartok can lead the heroes through the city to these encounters, or they can find their own way. Regardless, you are free to determine which encounters the heroes must deal with and in what order. Additionally, you can design your own noncombat encounters, particularly challenges that require the use of skills. For these challenges, use the following guidelines: easy task: DC 18, moderate task: DC 23, challenging task: DC 28, and hard task: DC 32.

For example, during the riots, an injured Nazren resistance fighter might become trapped on top of a condemned building, with no way to get down. You might determine that getting to the Nazren would be a moderate task (allowing Acrobatics checks to balance on the crumbling stairs or Climb checks to scale the outside of the building) at DC 23.

Once the heroes reach the roof, they can provide medical assistance or lower the Nazren safely to the ground.

Below are several skill-based encounters that you can use between combat encounters. Each gives the heroes experience points equivalent to defeating a CL 9 opponent.

- A Nazren resistance fighter picks up transmissions on an Imperial channel from a guard post that has received word of the riots. The heroes must pose as Imperial officers, making Deception or Persuasion checks to convince the guard post not to send reinforcements.
- A stash of weapons in an Imperial garrison could be enough to turn the tide in several sections of the city. The heroes try to use Deception to bluff their way into the garrison or Stealth to sneak in, obtaining the weapons and funneling them to the resistance.
- A communications array atop a Nazren building needs to be disabled so that the Empire cannot signal the *Arkanian Dragon* for help. The heroes can make Climb checks to reach the roof and then make Mechanics checks to secure explosives. Alternatively, they might make Use Computer checks to seize control of the array and use it to coordinate groups of resistance fighters throughout the city.
- A group of captured resistance fighters was abandoned in a detention facility when the Imperial guards were called away to reinforce another position. The heroes must make Mechanics or Strength checks to open the cell doors, allowing the prisoners to escape and join the resistance.
- For months, Nazren slaves have been covertly stowing the parts for an anti-aircraft weapon in secret locations, and now the resistance needs to build the weapon to protect against attacks by V-wing fighters stationed on Nizon. The heroes must make Endurance checks to help carry the heavy equipment up to the roof of a building, where the weapon must be assembled quickly with Mechanics checks.
- The chaos of the riots has left many resistance groups scattered and uncoordinated. One group in particular has obtained access codes to the Imperial garrison, but the group cannot be found. The heroes must make Gather Information checks to locate the missing Nazren or find alternative ways to contact them.
- Once the riots are well underway, Sartok needs the heroes' assistance in coordinating the rest of the attacks. They can make Knowledge (tactics) checks to plan the next attack or make Intelligence checks to notice flaws in Sartok's plans.

CHECKPOINT GAMMA

One of the ways that the Empire has kept the local population under control is with heavily armed checkpoints throughout the city. Movement is limited to those with the proper Imperial forms, making it difficult for the Nazren to gather and plan. Now, reports come to the heroes that a central checkpoint, Gamma, is being held by AT-RT walkers equipped with heavy weapons. Unless it can be opened up, the small units of Nazren trying to start an uprising won't be able to get together to form more effective squads of rioters.

See "Checkpoint Gamma" (page 16) for more information on running this encounter.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

As the Imperial forces begin to react to the rioting, a set of cannons on Mount Antas starts to bombard residential areas. As the heroes run by a building, it takes a hit and begins to collapse. Fire breaks out in the lower floors, and numerous young Nazren are trapped within the structure.

See "Collateral Damage" (page 18) for more information on running this encounter.

REST STOP

As the heroes make their way through the city, they find themselves cornered by advancing Imperial artillery. Fortunately, the heroes have earned a reputation in the city by now, and a Nazren woman comes to their aid, leading them to a safehouse to rest. This should give the heroes a chance to recover and heal, though their respite doesn't last long. Crab droids sent by Vrill Vrakth find the safehouse and burrow inside.

See "Rest Stop" (page 20) for more information on running this encounter.

THE BLACK SHIP

During the rioting, the heroes see a black cargo vessel fly overhead, trailing smoke from badly tuned engines. The ship has the same markings as the slave transport they saw in *The Queen of Air and Darkness*, as well as the ship that was being escorted off Nizon by the *Arkanian Dragon*. The black ship shrugs off light weapons fire from the surface and lands a short distance away. If Sartok is still with the heroes, he informs them that the vessel has landed near the slave pens, where there is still one shipload of Nazren scheduled to be flown offworld and sold into slavery.

The black ship is the same type as the one encountered in *The Queen of Air and Darkness*—a Gallofree Yards Medium Transport. It is staffed by 18 Trandoshan slavers, though only nine of them are free to fight at any given moment. The rest remain inside the ship, struggling to repair the damaged systems so that it can take off again as soon as the latest crop of slaves is aboard.

See "The Black Ship" (page 21) for more information on running this encounter.



An AT-RT walker with pilot.

MARTYR'S PLAZA

As the riots spread through the city, more and more Imperial forces leave their posts to reinforce troops in trouble elsewhere. Eventually, up to half the forces in each security zone have moved off, leaving those locations as vulnerable as they'll ever be. In particular, the forces in Martyr's Plaza have sent away one of their two AT-STs and several dozen troopers, leaving it less well guarded than at any time during the Imperial occupation. At the center of the plaza is the access to the underground control center, which directs all communications on Nizon and monitors the asteroid fragments that endanger nearby starships. As long as Imperial forces hold the control center, their vessels can fly freely through space around Nizon and land troops wherever they wish.

When word comes of the reduced security at the entrance to the control center, Sartok tells the heroes (either face to face or via comlink) to move to Martyr's Plaza and secure the entrance. If the heroes do so, they will allow the Nazren to take control of the center, which will enable them to keep the Empire off their world indefinitely.

See "Battle for Martyr's Plaza" (page 23) for more information on running this encounter.

POINT GOLD

Capturing the control center is the endgame of Sartok's plans to take back the planet, and once that has been accomplished, the Nazren believe that victory and freedom are inevitable. The Empire, however, has no faith in something as simple as asteroid fragments or a tracking station to secure a whole world. They have begun construction of a planetary turbolaser battery on Mount Antas outside the city, along with a shield generator large enough to cover the turbolasers and the city itself. While only one battery is currently operational, it has the firepower to challenge even a Star Destroyer and could be used to clear a section of space of rogue asteroid fragments, allowing troop ships to land. As long as the mountain base is in Imperial hands, more forces could return to retake the planet.

This base, Point Gold, is currently manned mostly by neutral technicians and minor Imperial officers. While Imperial doctrine calls for it to have an AT-AT and a division of troops, they have not arrived yet. All ground forces from the *Arkanian Dragon* were deployed throughout the city, and if the heroes have taken out the AT-ST already, they've dealt with the largest part of the ground forces.

However, Vril Vrakth has been using Point Gold as a base of operations for his attempts to target Sartok and the heroes. His ship is docked on a small landing bay at the edge of a construction platform, guarded by however many crab droids remain. With the whole planet in open revolt, Vrakth has been waiting for an opportunity to capture the heroes, assuming that they are behind the riots. The Zabrak bounty hunter has pulled the datachip for the Sarlacc Project, since he knows that the Imperials want it destroyed, and placed it in the center of the 15-meter-square construction platform, which is 60 meters up in the partially finished shield generator. He wants to be high up so that he can see the heroes coming. Vrakth believes that he can defeat them, turn the tide on the revolt, and collect a huge bounty from the Empire.

See "Point Gold" (page 25) for more information on running this encounter.

Vrakth remains in contact with his apprentice, a Trandosha bounty hunter named Koorst, who is flying in a cloakshape fighter with a hyperspace sled outside the range of the planet's asteroid fragments and dust clouds. Koorst can't fly safely to the surface now that the tracking station is in Nazren hands, but he receives constant reports from Vrakth during the rioting and even the final battle. If Vrakth is taken down, he drops an open comlink (unblocked by the Nazren in the control center) that shows Koorst yelling for more information. If the heroes pick up the comlink and Koorst sees any of their faces, he swears his eternal hatred of those who felled his mentor, then flies off into hyperspace. He will return in *The Gem of Alderaan*, later in the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Though Vrakth did not destroy the Sarlacc Project datachip, he still damaged it. It takes time and a DC 20 Use Computer check to get anything out of the cracked, burned chip. If the heroes can't manage that task, they have allies who can. Eventually, they discover that the Sarlacc Project is a massive construction effort taking place in the Deep Core, with costs so high that the Empire decided to complete it with slave labor. The information on the datachip does not specify any details about what, exactly, is being built. But all contacts and notes are tied directly to Coruscant, which seems to be the place to go for more information on the project.

The heroes are now honored allies of Nizon, treated with respect by any Nazren they encounter. Sartok begins to work toward a planetary council, though he confesses to the heroes that he hopes he isn't on it—he'd prefer to leave his leadership role behind. He does, however, ask the heroes to take a message of friendship to Senator Organa, along with an offer that the Nazren will help him against the Empire in the future. This victory is minor in the grand scheme of things, but it's an important beginning, proving that the Empire can be defeated, at least on small planets outside the Core Worlds.

If any heroes were killed during the adventure, the grateful Nazren erect a statue in their honor in Martyr's Plaza.

For the Empire's part, losing the Nazren as a source of slave labor is irritating, but thanks to the tracking station, they have little choice but to stay clear of the planet—at least temporarily. The Empire is too new to spend many resources dealing with the Nazren, and work on the Sarlacc Project can continue with Wookiee and Mon Calamari slaves. Believing that all information on the project has been destroyed, the Imperials abandon the world for the time being.



An AT-ST walker.

THE BREAKOUT

CHALLENGE LEVEL 11

SETUP

The detention camp has a 9-meter tall wall around it, with a single 3-meter wide gate in the middle of the northern wall. There are four 12-meter tall towers, one at each corner of the yard. Each tower contains two experienced heavy weapons stormtroopers (use the ARC Trooper statistics on page 282 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*). Being in the towers gives the stormtroopers cover and a clear shot at any target in the yard. There are 20 to 30 Nazren in the yard, most huddled together in the center, away from the walls and gate. Two Nek dogs patrol the inside of the yard, but they don't get closer than a few meters from any of the Nazren.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes scout the detention camp, read the following text.

There are several small yards near the center of town, but these are clearly only for the elderly and very young. They have few guards and low walls, and the Nazren within them seem unlikely to be able to run even if unguarded.

The central detention yard is different. Thirty meters on a side, it is a large square enclosed by a tall stone wall, which looks like it was built from the rubble of collapsed buildings. A metal gate in the north wall of the yard controls access and is apparently remotely operated. There are four guard towers, one at each corner of the yard, with two heavily armed stormtroopers in each. Two vicious, cybernetically enhanced Nek dogs patrol the inside of the yard, growling at the prisoners without getting too close to them. Most of the Nazren huddle together in the center of the yard, but you notice one captive keeping an eye on the others and moving around the outside of the group to stay between them and the Nek dogs.

NEK DOGS

In addition to the eight heavy weapons stormtroopers, there are two Nek dogs in the yard. Use the statistics for the wampa (page 277 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*), but remove the arctic trait and use the description below.

Prowling along the inside of the yard are two large quadrupeds, roughly 2 meters tall at the shoulder. The vaguely canine creatures are powerfully muscled and covered in a tough brownish hide. Their huge mouths have three rows of razor-sharp teeth, and their legs each have three long claws.

TACTICS

At least half the stormtroopers stay in their towers unless a pressing need (such as the tower being set on fire or targeted by a thermal detonator) drives them out. With heavy weapons, a clear field of fire, and fortified positions, the stormtroopers simply shoot at any characters breaking in or out. Most of the Nazren throw themselves prone when any fighting starts (so as not to get in Sartok's way) and are ignored by

the stormtroopers. This also prevents the tower guards from going after the heroes immediately, as they must continue to watch the prisoners.

The stormtroopers who are free to engage the heroes move onto the stone wall around the yard to get closer to any heroes shooting or escaping.

The Nek battle dogs attack heroes who have melee weapons over those who have ranged weapons. If a character tries to leave the yard, the nearest Nek dog makes a grab attack against that character. The creatures fight only until they have lost half of their hit points. After that, they retreat and do not attack unless threatened.

CONCLUSION

If any prisoners escape from the yard, reinforcements—a squad of eight crack stormtroopers (with the same statistics as those in the towers)—are dispatched to track and recapture them. It takes the reinforcements 5 minutes to muster and reach the detention camp. If the heroes are willing to be led by Sartok, he guides them through a series of caves (parts of the underground river that ran dry decades ago) to a particular hidden cavern. If they refuse, Sartok follows them and offers his aid once the reinforcements track them down. After that, the heroes can find any place to hole up as long as they stay off the streets. Within hours, their faces are plastered on posters all over the city.

ENCOUNTER MAP

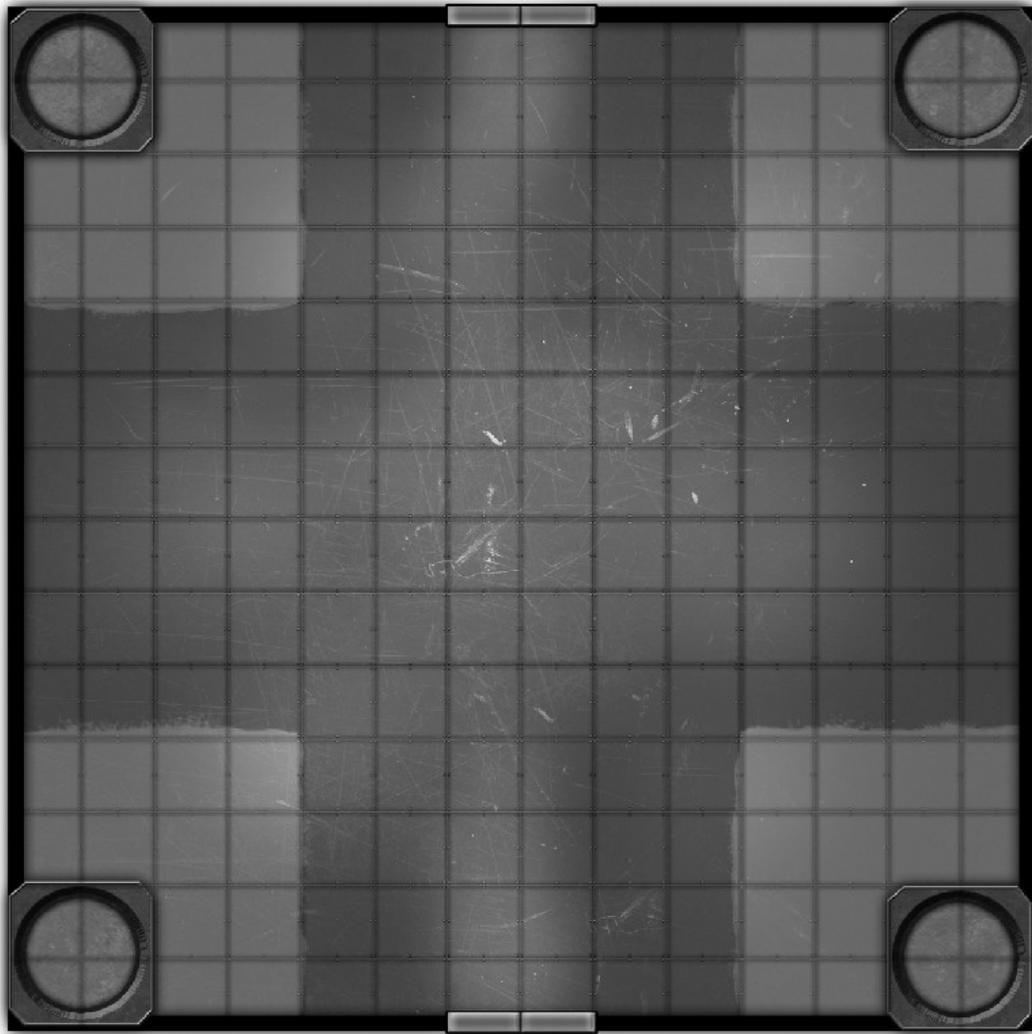
See the map of the encounter on page 15.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The outer wall of the yard is made of meter-thick stone (DR 10, 500 hit points per square). The gate is neutronium-reinforced lanthanide, but much thinner (DR 15, 150 hit points). The hinges of the gate are even thinner but can be hit only by a very well-placed shot (Reflex Defense 25). Heroes can also make a Mechanics check to carefully place an explosive.

Gravity plates have been placed 1 meter underground around each tower, as shown on the map. These squares count as high-gravity environments (see page 257 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*). A DC 20 Perception check is required to notice the effects of the gravity plates at range, and a DC 20 Mechanics check is required to disable a plate. If any square takes 50 or more points of damage, the plate beneath stops working.

THE BREAKOUT ENCOUNTER MAP



CHECKPOINT GAMMA

CHALLENGE LEVEL 9

SETUP

This is a wide street, littered with abandoned crates and broken-down speeders. The checkpoint is a gate between two ferrocrete barricades. Behind it, three AT-RT personal walkers fire freely at anyone who does not have clearance to pass through.

READ-ALoud TEXT

Read the following text aloud as soon as the insurrection starts. If the heroes have agreed to help the Nazren, they are sought out for aid. Otherwise, they happen to be the first people the wounded Nazren finds while looking for assistance.

A Nazren with serious battle wounds comes stumbling out of the smoke. Upon seeing you, she rushes up, pointing to a rubble-choked street behind her.

"The Imperials have set up a new checkpoint, with heavy weapons guarding it! We can't break through, and it's preventing our two largest groups from connecting and taking control of the outer sections of the city!"

Through the smoke, you see flashes of heavy blaster fire and hear more Nazren running from a fight that seems to be too much for them.

AT-RTs

Because the dust and grit in the air tends to cause fast wear and tear on speeders, the Empire has assigned a dozen old AT-RTs (one-person walkers) left over from the Clone Wars to reinforce ground troops in the city. Three of them are present at this checkpoint. The pilots of the vehicles are veteran clone troopers, in the last years of their service to the Empire. If you need statistics for the pilots, use those of the clone trooper on page 281 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*. However, if an AT-RT is taken down, its pilot most likely is out of the fight.

AT-RT (3)

Large ground vehicle (walker)
Init +8; **Senses** Perception +3

CL 6

Defense Ref 14 (flat-footed 13), Fort 20; +3 armor
hp 60; **DR** 10; **Threshold** 30

Speed 5 squares (max. velocity 70 km/h)
Ranged laser cannon +7 (see below) or
Ranged mortar launcher +7 (see below)
Fighting Space 2×2; **Cover** +5
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +25
Atk Options autofire (laser cannon)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con —, Int 12
Skills Initiative +8, Mechanics +4, Perception +3, Pilot +8

Crew 1 (expert); **Passengers** none

Cargo 6 kg; **Consumables** 1 day; **Carried Craft** none
Payload 12 mortar rounds
Availability Restricted; **Cost** Not available for sale

Laser cannon (pilot)
Atk +7 (+2 autofire), **Dmg** 4d10

Mortar launcher (pilot)
Atk +7, **Dmg** 3d6, 2-square burst

TACTICS

This early in the insurrection, the Imperial forces aren't taking the uprising too seriously. If the AT-RT pilots don't see any heavy weapons, they march out and deal with attackers directly. If an obvious threat (such as a blaster cannon) is present, the pilots stay behind their barrier and fire from cover, using mortars to attack foes in cover or tight groups.

CONCLUSION

If the heroes take out Checkpoint Gamma, Vril Vrakth sends two of his crab droids (see "Point Gold," page 25) into the chaos as the Nazren link up to take control of various parts of the city. If the heroes don't destroy the checkpoint (either because they don't try or because the fight goes badly for them), Vrakth gathers information about their activities from Imperial allies and sends two crab droids into the next encounter the heroes have.

If any AT-RTs survive, they show signs of damage. The Nazren offer to haul the walkers to an underground shop to see if they can be updated. If a hero insists on piloting a walker, he must make a DC 20 Mechanics check between each encounter to keep it running smoothly. Be sure to keep track of its payload, its reduced hit points, and its position on the condition track.

ENCOUNTER MAP

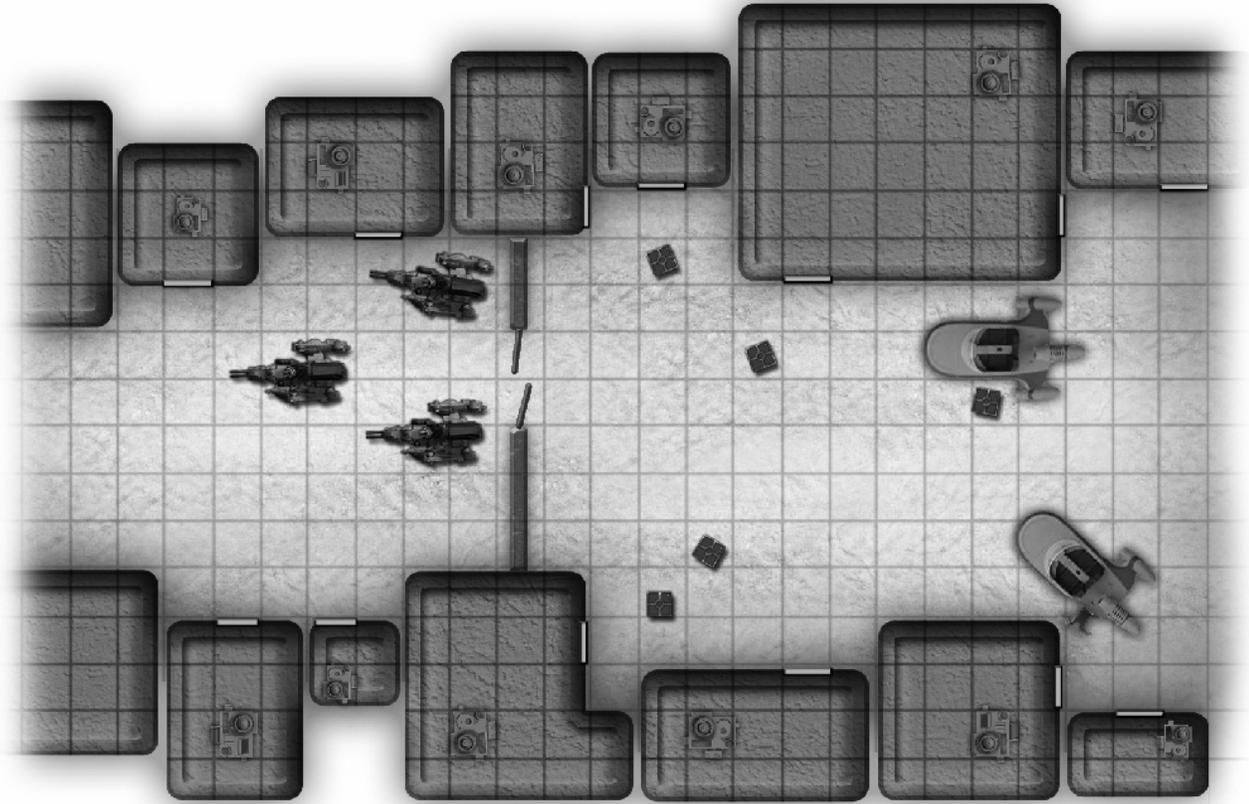
See the map of the area on page 17.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The barrier across the roadway is made of ferrocrete (DR 10, 300 hit points per square). It's 1.5 meters high and gives cover to the AT-RTs against any attacks from the far side. The gate is only wire mesh (DR 3, 20 hit points) and gives no cover.

The stone buildings to either side are old, and chunks of them can be brought down on a 2×2 area with a successful attack (Reflex Defense 5, attack must deal 20 or more points of damage). At least one AT-RT pilot tries this with his laser cannon if any heroes stay behind cover, and the option is available for the heroes as well. Such chunks count as large falling objects. A successful Mechanics check to place demolitions can create a huge falling object.

CHECKPOINT GAMMA ENCOUNTER MAP



COLLATERAL DAMAGE

CHALLENGE LEVEL 10

SETUP

This area features two buildings, the collapsing residential building and a small warehouse. Stormtroopers are positioned on the roof of the warehouse. Anyone inside either building has cover from attacks from the outside, and anyone on the roof of either building has cover from those not on one of the two roofs.

READ-ALoud TEXT

Read the following text aloud any time the heroes are moving from one part of the city to another.

The sounds of distant combat echo from every street as the city erupts into widespread violence. The smell of smoke and burned insulation becomes thick enough to reach you even through your filter masks. A loud clap of thunder announces the opening of heavy blaster artillery bombarding the city from the base of Mount Antas. One of the heavy bolts arcs into the city near you, and a wave of debris showers over you as a building takes a direct hit.

Nazren children inside the building cry for help as the structure leans to the side, and fire bursts out through the lower-floor windows. A few adult Nazren rush toward the building but are forced to take cover as stormtroopers on the roof of a nearby warehouse open fire on them. While the children seem to be moving safely to the top of their ravaged home, the burning building will claim their lives in a matter of minutes if the stormtroopers don't allow some rescue effort.

NAZREN CHILDREN

There are a dozen panicked Nazren children trapped on the roof of the burning building. They are Small 1st-level nonheroic characters, unwilling to make attacks and not currently the targets of any enemy fire. Treat them as having Defenses of 10 and skill checks of +0 if their abilities become important. The children will obey anyone who is clearly trying to assist them.

A dozen stormtroopers are on the warehouse roof. Use the heavy stormtrooper statistics on page 279 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*.

TACTICS

The stormtroopers are here to call in targeting instructions to the blaster artillery on Mount Antas. They had the residential building hit to ensure that no provocateurs were inside (none were). They have no interest in the trapped children and don't target them, but the stormtroopers shoot at any hero or armed Nazren. The stormtroopers try to hold their defensible position on the warehouse roof, but they move if forced to (such as if someone throws a thermal detonator onto the roof). Otherwise, they shoot first at any hero who doesn't have cover, and then at any hero who seems heavily armed. If a character shows a lightsaber, that character is targeted with frag grenades until the stormtroopers run out.

CONCLUSION

Nazren civilians come out of basements and bunkers to offer to care for any rescued child. These adult Nazren are grateful to the heroes for their help and offer what minor assistance they can. A single medpac may be available for wounded heroes, or the Nazren can give directions to any other part of the city, including Martyr's Plaza, the spaceport, or even the artillery if a hero thinks to ask—one of the Nazren here helped dig the moorings for the blaster cannons.

If a stormtrooper is killed or captured, his utility belt beeps, revealing a coded comlink. A DC 15 Use Computer check allows a character to activate the comlink and receive communication from the blaster artillery on the lower levels of Mount Antas. The artillery is reporting to all spotters to hold targeting commands until further notice. The old Clone Wars-era artillery has suffered a malfunction and won't be able to fire for another 15 minutes or so. The comlink is attached to a datapad that shows the artillery's concealed location. Armed with this information, the heroes may make a strike on the artillery.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of the area on page 19.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

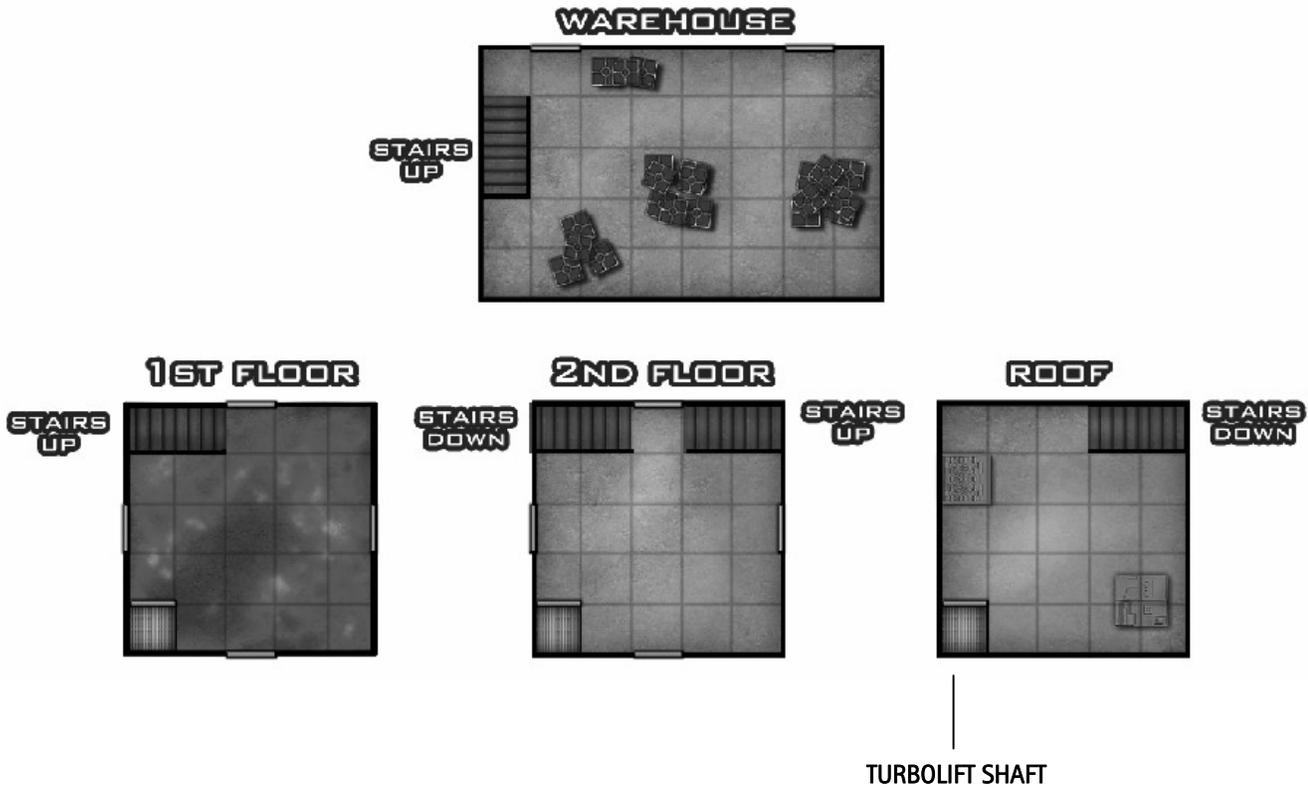
The collapsing building is 12 meters tall, and all Nazren inside it are currently on the top floor. Moving through the building is hard because it's badly damaged, and the whole building counts as difficult terrain.

The bottom floor is on fire. Each round that the heroes are in it, they suffer a fire attack (1d20+5) against their Fortitude Defense. On a successful attack, they take 1d6 points of damage and catch on fire; on a miss, they take half damage and do not catch on fire. Taking reasonable precautions (such as getting wet or covering up with a thick blanket) adds +5 to that character's Fortitude Defense against the fire attacks. A character who is on fire can put himself out as a full-round action.

The entire burning building is also a smoke hazard. Each round that a character is exposed to a smoke hazard, make an attack roll (1d20+5) against the target's Fortitude Defense. If the attack succeeds, the target takes 1d6 points of damage and moves -1 step down the condition track. If the attack fails, the target takes half damage and does not move down the condition track. Being in the smoke grants concealment, and creatures not in the smoke have concealment against those in the smoke.

Though the stairs in the burning building still work, they are in the far corner, reachable only by moving through a lot of smoke and fire. The turbolift shaft, which is closer, no longer has a working turbolift, but it can be climbed with a DC 20 Climb check. A character can also climb up the outside of the building with a DC 15 Climb check. Climbing up the outside of the building protects a hero from smoke damage but not from fire. Climbing while carrying a Nazren child imposes a -2 penalty to the check, and climbing while carrying a Medium creature imposes a -5 penalty to the check. (*continues on next page*)

COLLATERAL DAMAGE ENCOUNTER MAP



FEATURES OF THE AREA

(continued from previous page)

The roof of the burning building is currently free of fire and smoke hazards, but that won't last long. Every 5 rounds, one randomly selected square of the roof catches fire, and all surrounding squares become smoke hazards. Once there is no longer enough room on the roof for all refugees, they begin to jump. Make a 1d20 attack roll against a falling character's Fortitude Defense. On a successful attack, the character takes 4d6 points of damage; on a failed attack, the character takes half damage. (The adult Nazren in the area gather around the building, ignoring stormtrooper fire to catch any children who jump so that the kids don't take falling damage.)

The warehouse is in much better shape. A lip runs around the outer edge, allowing any prone character to gain cover against attacks made from the ground or the burning building. The outer wall of the warehouse is more difficult to climb (DC 20 Climb check), but the building has two working lifts inside.

Any time a frag grenade or other explosive is set off inside the burning building (most likely thrown by the stormtroopers), everyone in the building is showered with rubble as the damaged structure shudders. (Make a 1d20+5 attack roll against everyone's Reflex Defense, dealing 2d6 points of damage on a hit and none on a miss.)

REST STOP

CHALLENGE LEVEL 9

SETUP

As starfighter-damaged buildings bury a street, an old Nazren woman leads the heroes to safety. They get a few minutes of respite before some of Vrill Vrakh's crab droids find them.

READ-ALoud TEXT

Read the following text aloud any time the heroes seem to need a break from nonstop rioting.

V-wings go screaming overhead, dropping mines and making blaster-fire runs on larger buildings. One of the buildings beside you explodes, sending chunks of rubble everywhere. The buildings groan and look ready to collapse.

From a set of stairs leading down into a sturdy-looking basement bunker, a voice calls to you. "Over here! Quickly, you'll be safe here!" A frail, older Nazren female waves you to follow her into the lower level of what seems to be a church or old meeting house. With a loud crack, other buildings begin to slide into the street and threaten to bury you.

YURKA AGGEL

The old Nazren is Yurka Aggel, a healer and wise woman among her kind. She aids the heroes in any way she can, which is mostly limited to her single Force power, *vital transfer*. Aggel has seen her people go from a proud and independent civilization to Imperial slaves, and she is happy to see the Nazren rise up to throw off the Empire's shackles.

Yurka Aggel: 3rd-level nonheroic; 24 hp; *vital transfer*; Use the Force +5.

Since Aggel isn't going to fight the heroes, isn't attacked by the crab droids, and doesn't go with the heroes, you're unlikely to need other statistics for her. If you do, use the statistics for the rebel trooper (page 280 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*).

CRAB DROIDS

Unless they've all been destroyed already (which is unlikely), three of Vrill Vrakh's crab droids crawl in through a tunnel in the back of the shelter and attack the heroes. Use the statistics on page 201 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*. The crab droids have no interest in Yurka Aggel but are happy to attack Sartok if he's present.

TACTICS

The crab droids aren't complicated. They march in, start firing, and continue to fire until destroyed.

CONCLUSION

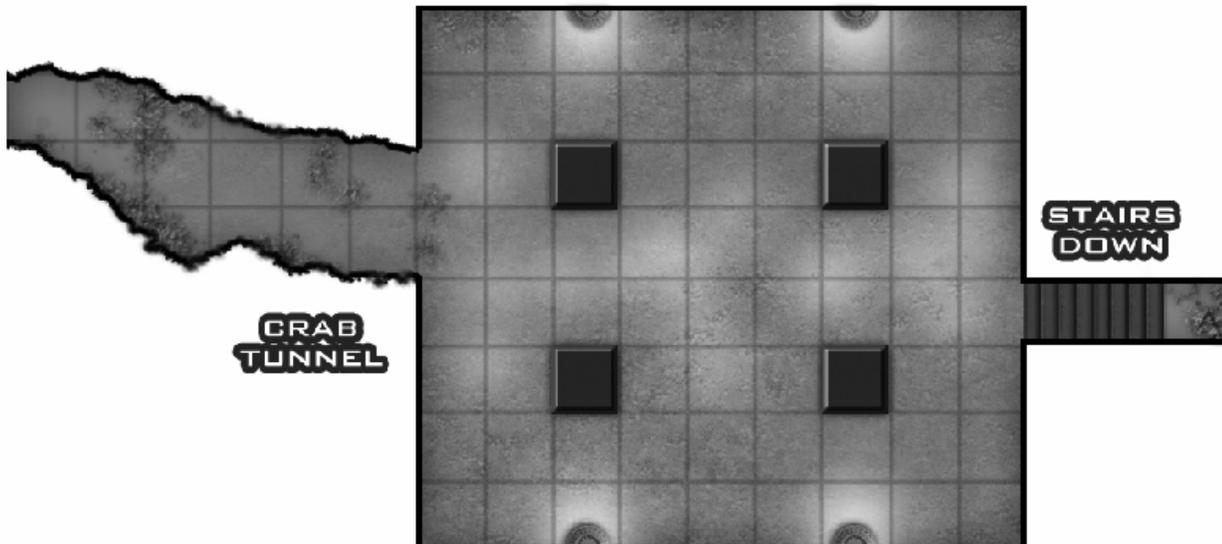
Yurka Aggel suggests that the crab droids must have been looking for someone, possibly based on spotter's reports from the V-wings. An inspection of the crab droids shows that they have been heavily damaged, repaired, and modified over the years, but not by the Empire. Each droid bears an owner's stamp. Anyone who knows Zabrak or who makes a DC 15 Knowledge (galactic lore) check can identify the stamp as a Zabrak symbol that is best translated as "long hunter." This might be the heroes' first clue that a bounty hunter is on their trail.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of the area below.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The walls of this basement are sturdy, as are the pillars holding it up. The crab droids dig their way in across from the entrance and leave a tunnel leading out. The stairs are buried when the buildings outside collapse, so the tunnel becomes the only exit.



THE BLACK SHIP

CHALLENGE LEVEL 10

SETUP

The cliff wall that runs along the north edge of the landing platform is very rough and has numerous cables and sensors bolted to it. This makes it very easy to climb (DC 7 Climb check) and gives characters the opportunity to take cover if they wish. A cable can be used as an improvised electrostaff (dealing 4d6 points of damage) but can't be taken more than 3 squares from the wall without breaking loose and losing power. A DC 20 Mechanics check allows a wrenched-free cable to incapacitate the black ship, stranding the Trandoshan slavers here.

The slavers also have four nashtah, six-legged lizards about the size of a big dog.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes approach the site of the slaver ship (named *The Bloody Credit*), read the following.

The foul scent of acidic vapors chokes the air, and you hear the barks of rushed orders ahead of you. Turning the corner, you see a group of Trandoshans in old military jumpsuits, along with four multilegged lizard beasts, all wearing breath masks and driving a line of Nazren toward the black ship. You've seen ships of this type before—they carry slaves. The Trandoshans seem to be in a hurry and aren't being gentle. They cuff and beat the Nazren, forcing the prisoners along a docking wall covered with cables and into the ship's loading ramp.

SLAVERS

The Trandoshan slavers are experienced mercenaries who fought as Separatist soldiers during the Clone Wars and who have been capturing and moving Wookiees for the Empire. Because they usually want to capture subjects alive and often have to deal with rebellious slaves without damaging them too badly, the slavers have more experience in unarmed combat than with firing blasters.

Nine Trandoshans remain inside the ship, trying to repair its systems so that it can take off again. Meanwhile, nine more slavers are rounding up Nazren outside.

Much of the cargo space in *The Bloody Credit* has been converted to slave pens. The Trandoshans use all the regular passenger space for themselves, allowing the ship to have a larger-than-normal crew.

NASHTAH

For the nashtah, use the nexu statistics on page 276 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*. Like the slavers, the nashtah have breath masks strapped on to protect them from the smoke. Choose one of the slavers to be the nashtah handler. If that slaver is taken out, the nashtah flee the scene if they are intimidated, move more than 1 step down the condition track, or suffer any fear effect. Otherwise, the beasts attack the closest hero at the beginning of each round.

TACTICS

The Trandoshans want to escape with enough slaves to turn a profit. If that doesn't seem likely, however, they run for it. If they can get all their

forces into the ship, it takes off with whatever slaves are already inside. If the heroes gain control of the ship, the remaining slavers run into the city and try to hide from the Nazren's wrath.

Slaver (9)

CL 5

Medium Trandoshan soldier 5

Force 4

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision; Perception +3

Languages Basic, Dosh

Defense Ref 21 (flat-footed 19), Fort 20, Will 16
hp 72; **Threshold** 20

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +10 (1d8+8) or
unarmed +6 (1d8+12) with 4 points of Power Attack or
unarmed +10 (2d8+8) with Mighty Swing

Ranged hold-out blaster +7 (3d4+2)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +10

Atk Options Devastating Attack (simple weapons), Melee Smash, Mighty Swing, Stunning Strike

Special Actions limb regeneration

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Talents Devastating Attack (simple weapons), Melee Smash, Stunning Strike

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Martial Arts I, Martial Arts II, Mighty Swing, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +10, Jump +12

Possessions hold-out blaster, comlink

The Bloody Credit

CL 8

Colossal space transport

Init -5; **Senses** Perception +5

Defense Ref 14 (flat-footed 14), Fort 31; +14 armor
hp 130; **DR** 15; **SR** 45; **Threshold** 81

Speed fly 12 squares (max. velocity 650 km/h), fly 2 squares (starship scale)

Fighting Space 1 square (starship scale); **Cover** total (crew)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +41

Abilities Str 53, Dex 10, Con —, Int 12

Skills Initiative -5, Mechanics +5, Perception +5, Pilot -5, Use Computer +5

Crew 6 (normal); **Passengers** 40

Cargo 19,000 tons; **Consumables** 6 months; **Carried Craft** none

Hyperdrive ×4, navcomputer

Availability Licensed; **Cost** 350,000 (125,000 used)

CONCLUSION

If *The Bloody Credit* gets away, the heroes have a few options. If they dare, they can take to their starship and go after it. If they take this approach, run a space battle at the edge of the planet's ring of dust and debris, using the same rules as in Part 2: Into the Jaws (page 6). If the combat lasts more than 10 rounds, three V-wings arrive to aid the slave ship. Three additional V-wings arrive on round 15, and the *Arkanian Dragon* shows up on round 20. (If the heroes managed to defeat the *Dragon* earlier in the adventure, use whatever Star Destroyer comes to replace it.) However, if at any time the slaver ship has fewer than half its hit points and no Imperial ship is present to assist it, the Trandoshans surrender and either land or allow the heroes to board their ship.

Any freed slaves immediately grab weapons from the slavers (or use tools or sticks to arm themselves if nothing else is handy) and rush off to join the revolt. (They don't attack the Trandoshans, leaving that to the heroes, which prevents you from having to run too many GM characters in this conflict.) This escalates the rioting within the city to its peak and draws Imperial forces away from Martyr's Plaza. If the heroes fail to free any slaves (and thus don't draw forces away from the plaza), add an AT-RT (from the "Checkpoint Gamma" encounter) to the "Battle for Martyr's Plaza" encounter.

If there are any crab droids left in Vrakth's arsenal, they attack the heroes at the landing pad 5 minutes after the slaver encounter ends. They fight until one crab droid is destroyed, at which point the remaining droids flee in different directions to rendezvous with Vrakth.

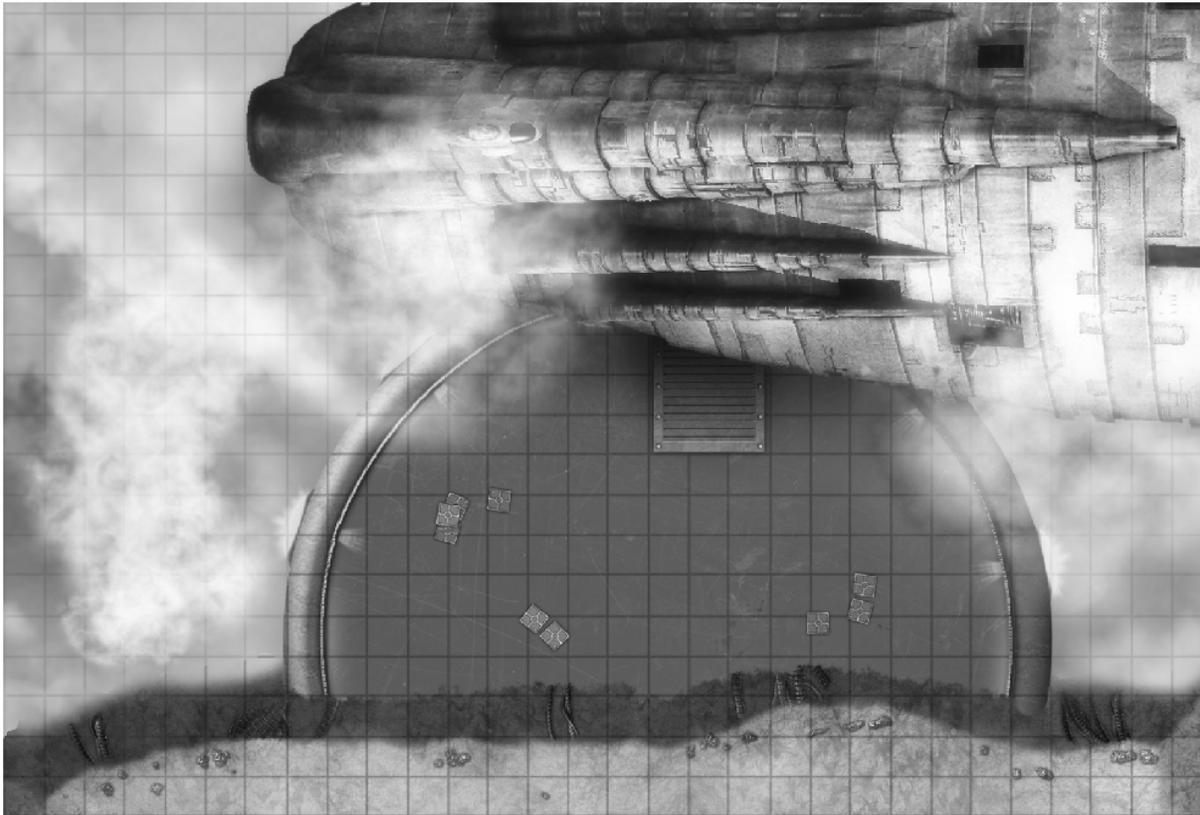
ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of the area below.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The entire area is filled with smoke; the badly tuned engines of the slavers' ship belch gas and impurities into the air. The slavers had planned to get the engines fixed before taking off, but the rioting has convinced them otherwise. The smoke acts as an atmospheric hazard, making a 1d20+5 attack against the Fortitude Defense of all creatures not wearing breath masks (as all the slavers and nashtah are). A successful attack deals 1d6 points of damage and moves a target -1 step down the condition track. Crude efforts to block the smoke (such as tying a wet cloth across the mouth) don't prevent the damage but do stop the target from automatically moving down the condition track. All of the Nazren slaves are protected in this manner, but each slave would gladly give his or her protection to a hero in trouble. The smoke also gives everyone in the area concealment if they are not adjacent to their attacker.

The nine Trandoshans in the ship are too busy to fight anyone who gets inside; the ship is in bad shape and needs care or it won't take off. Any hero inside the ship can free five Nazren slaves each round. There are 60 slaves inside the ship.



BATTLE FOR MARTYR'S PLAZA

CHALLENGE LEVEL 11

SETUP

At the center of Martyr's Plaza is a 9-meter wide stone dome with a hatch on top. Three massive statues surround it, depicting ancient martyred heroes of the Nazren. The Empire has set up three defensive turrets between the statues. An AT-ST patrols the 30-meter-wide empty circle around the dome and statues. If there are any other forces here, they support the AT-ST.

The AT-ST is a major foe for the heroes, and this battle is one of the centerpieces of the adventure. The heroes might be able to defeat the walker through sheer firepower, but they can also attempt to take control of a turret or topple a giant statue onto the AT-ST. If the heroes come up with another workable plan for dealing with the walker, feel free to run with it. Beating the machine that has terrified the Nazren for months should be the heroes' greatest moment of glory to date.

READ-ALoud TEXT

Read the following text as soon as the heroes can see the plaza.

Martyr's Plaza is a picture of dichotomy. The ornate central stone dome is covered in scrollwork and decorative bas reliefs of Nazren history. A hatch sits atop the dome, its thick metal etched with golden colors. Standing around the dome are three 15-meter-tall statues. Each depicts a Nazren in robes, arms extended and face tilted up to the sky. Though the statues are noble and moving, they are also centuries old. Each shows signs of wear from the elements, and their bases are cracked and worn away. One of the statues leans slightly, and the others don't seem securely set in their mountings.

Marring this peaceful and holy place are the ugly scars of Imperial occupation. Three armored turrets sit between the statues, blasters tracking the outer rim of the plaza. Walking in patrol around the dome is an All-Terrain Scout Transport, a massive war machine armed with twin blaster cannons, twin light blasters, and a grenade launcher. The walker seems undamaged and is alert for possible trouble.

Each turret is located between two of the three statues. As a result, each one has line of sight to only a third of the battlefield, and the turrets cannot target each other. Treat them as stationary Incom-T47 airspeeders (they have the same weapons, defenses, DR, and hit points, and they are manned by skilled soldiers).

TACTICS

The AT-ST is aggressive, hunting down any heroes it spots and attacking with a full weapon load. If a hero has cover, the walker isn't shy about using its grenade launcher to attack an area or firing all weapons at the cover to destroy it. The turrets have fewer options and simply fire at anything in their line of sight that isn't Imperial. If an enemy vehicle appears, a turret tries to tie it down with a harpoon gun. Whenever possible, each turret provides cover fire for the AT-ST, and the walker tries to ensure that no one swarms over and takes control of a turret.

If the heroes defeat the AT-ST and the turrets, they can open the hatch in the stone dome and descend into the underground control center. The six Imperial technicians inside the station surrender. They

realize that they have no chance against any force able to defeat a walker. On the other hand, if you want to run another encounter in the control center, have the Imperial technicians resist the intruders.

Imperial Technician (6)

CL 2

Medium Human nonheroic 3/soldier 1

Force 1; **Dark Side** 3

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +2

Languages Basic, Binary (understand only)

Defenses Ref 13 (flat-footed 12), Fort 13, Will 11

hp 14; **Threshold** 13

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +3 (1d4)

Ranged blaster pistol +5 (3d6+2)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Talents Weapon Specialization (pistols)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Skill Training (Knowledge [technology]), Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Knowledge (technology) +7, Mechanics +7, Use Computer +7

Possessions blaster pistol, comlink, utility belt, blast helmet and vest

CONCLUSION

Once the heroes and their Nazren allies take over the control center, they are in charge of all communication on the planet. They can cut off Imperial communications planetwide, and they begin to hear reports of Nazren defeating stormtroopers throughout the city.

In addition, the Nazren now control the rogue tracking station. The Empire will have to deal with rogue fragments if they wish to land on Nizon from space, greatly increasing the difficulty of an Imperial mission to retake the planet.

The control center is also able to track the crab droids that have been harassing the heroes by tracing their signal back to its origin. If a hero thinks to try this, it requires a DC 15 Use Computer check.

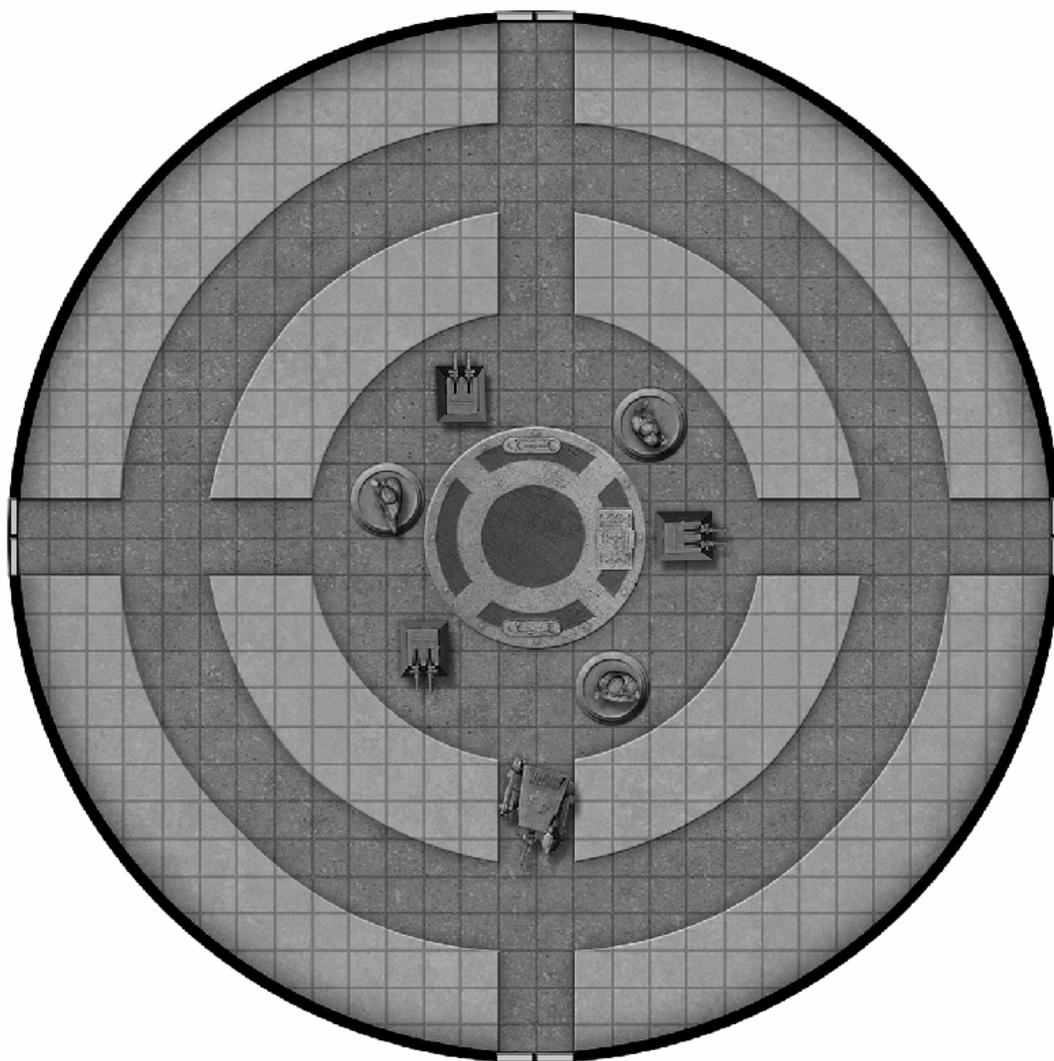
The heroes also detect a message from an Imperial officer to Vrith Vrakth, who is stationed on Mount Antas. It instructs him to wait for any remaining officers within the city, then destroy the Sarlacc Project database and evacuate the planet. Vrakth acknowledges the order but doesn't promise to obey it. If the heroes contact Vrakth, he offers to leave the database intact but taunts them by suggesting that they come talk to him about it in person. Vrakth isn't done with his hunt just yet.

If Sartok accompanied the heroes into the control center, he asks to remain there so that he can coordinate revolts planetwide. However, if the heroes want him to keep traveling with them, he agrees to do so, assigning another Nazren to stay and begin the worldwide operations.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of the area on page 24.

BATTLE FOR MARTYR'S PLAZA ENCOUNTER MAP



24

THE FIRST TO STRIKE

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The three central statues of the martyrs are sitting loose on their bases, and each weighs as much as a space transport. However, a judicious use of explosives might be able to knock one over, possibly crushing a turret or even the AT-ST. A single charge of explosives can knock over a statue if a DC 35 Mechanics check is made to set the charge. Four or more charges of explosives can do it with a DC 25 Mechanics check. Also, any attack at the base of a statue that hits a Reflex Defense of 20 and deals 50 or more points of damage knocks over that statue. (Each statue has a Reflex Defense of 5, but an attack that doesn't hit a Reflex Defense of 20 lacks the precision to knock it over—the attack merely causes damage instead.)

If a statue is knocked over, it covers an area 3 squares wide and 10 squares long, starting from its base. Whoever knocked it over decides exactly what area it covers and makes an attack roll (using only base attack bonus) against everything in the area. A successful attack deals 15d6 points of damage to a target; a miss that hits at least a Defense of 10 deals 5d6 points of damage. Any target that moves a step down the condition track from this damage is pinned under the rubble and can free himself only by making a Strength check with a DC equal to the damage dealt. Anyone unable to free himself can be dug out by a dozen or so workers in 10 to 20 minutes.

The hatch on the dome, which leads to the underground control center, has DR 20 and 150 hit points. It can be bypassed with a DC 30 Mechanics check.

POINT GOLD

CHALLENGE LEVEL 12

SETUP

This encounter follows immediately after the heroes seize the entrance to the control center beneath Martyr's Plaza. It takes place atop a shield generator on Mount Antas, which was under construction when the riots began.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes arrive in this area, read the following text aloud:

The massive shield generator is incomplete but is already the biggest structure in or near the city. While the eastern third is finished, the rest is a mass of unfinished framework and construction platforms. The far western section of the frame has a platform many meters in the air, with a cloakshape fighter docked next to it. A Zabrak male in battle armor stands at the edge of the platform and beckons to you. He holds a datachip in his hand and touches his throat. His voice booms out over the distance.

"Is this what you've caused all this difficulty over? Is this why a request was made to Aldera University about this dustball? Well, then, come and get it from me. Inquisitor Draco will pay me well for bringing him your battered bodies in manacles!"

VRIL VRAKTH

Vril Vrakth was raised on a failed colony, a world too harsh to support much life. As food and resources became increasingly scarce, his people turned on themselves in a series of increasingly vicious settlement wars. Though Vrakth originally began training as a soldier, he changed to follow the career of a scout. He learned the value of hunting prey with caution, but he also learned that most battles are won by those who shoot the fastest and can withstand the most damage. When a bounty hunter named Jeyrs Hundar followed a criminal to Vrakth's homeland, the young Zabrak was one of only a handful of colonists still alive. Impressed with Vrakth's tenacity and self-reliance, Hundar took him on as an apprentice bounty hunter.

Vrakth alternated between training to be a warrior and training to be a hunter, eventually becoming a crack shot with a pistol. He served as Hundar's backup, covering escape routes and double-teaming the targets that were too dangerous to take solo. When Hundar proved too slow to bring in a particularly vicious Rodian, Vrakth completed the job. This established him as a feared bounty hunter (despite having no levels in the bounty hunter prestige class—Vrakth is as much an assassin as a hunter). He soon came to the attention of a local Republic governor, who used him to hunt down CIS generals during the Clone Wars. Vrakth now works almost exclusively for the Empire, especially Inquisitor Valin Draco.

Vril Vrakth

CR 10

Medium Zabrak soldier 3/scout 4/gunslinger 3

Force 8

Init +8 (Improved Quick Draw with pistol); **Senses** Perception +11

Languages Basic, Huttese, Zabrak

Defense Ref 32 (29), Fort 27, Will 24
hp 92; **Threshold** 27

Speed 4 squares

Melee force pike +11 (2d8+9)

Ranged heavy blaster pistol +13 (3d8+6) or

heavy blaster pistol +13 (4d8+6) with Rapid Shot (Trigger Work) or

Ranged thermal detonator +12 (8d6+5) (4-square burst)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8

Special Qualities heightened awareness, trusty sidearm +1

Talents Armored Defense, Evasion, Improved Armored Defense, Improved Quick Draw, Surefooted, Trigger Work

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Extra Second Wind, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Shake It Off, Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +12, Knowledge (Tactics) +11, Mechanics +11, Perception +11 (may reroll)

Possessions heavy blaster pistol (2), force pike, thermal detonators (4), battle armor, comlink, pocket scrambler, code cylinder, voice amplifier (can be heard clearly from half a kilometer away)

CRAB DROIDS

Vrakth has six crab droids (see page 201 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*) that he has modified to obey him and serve as his scouts and hunting drones. Each has an added comlink, which allows him to give them override orders from his cloakshape fighter. The droids have been hunting and harassing the heroes throughout their time on Nizon, and if any remain, they are here. Since Vrakth is not directly controlling the crab droids, they attack the nearest foe who attacks Vrakth. Any hero who does not attack the bounty hunter is ignored by the crab droids.

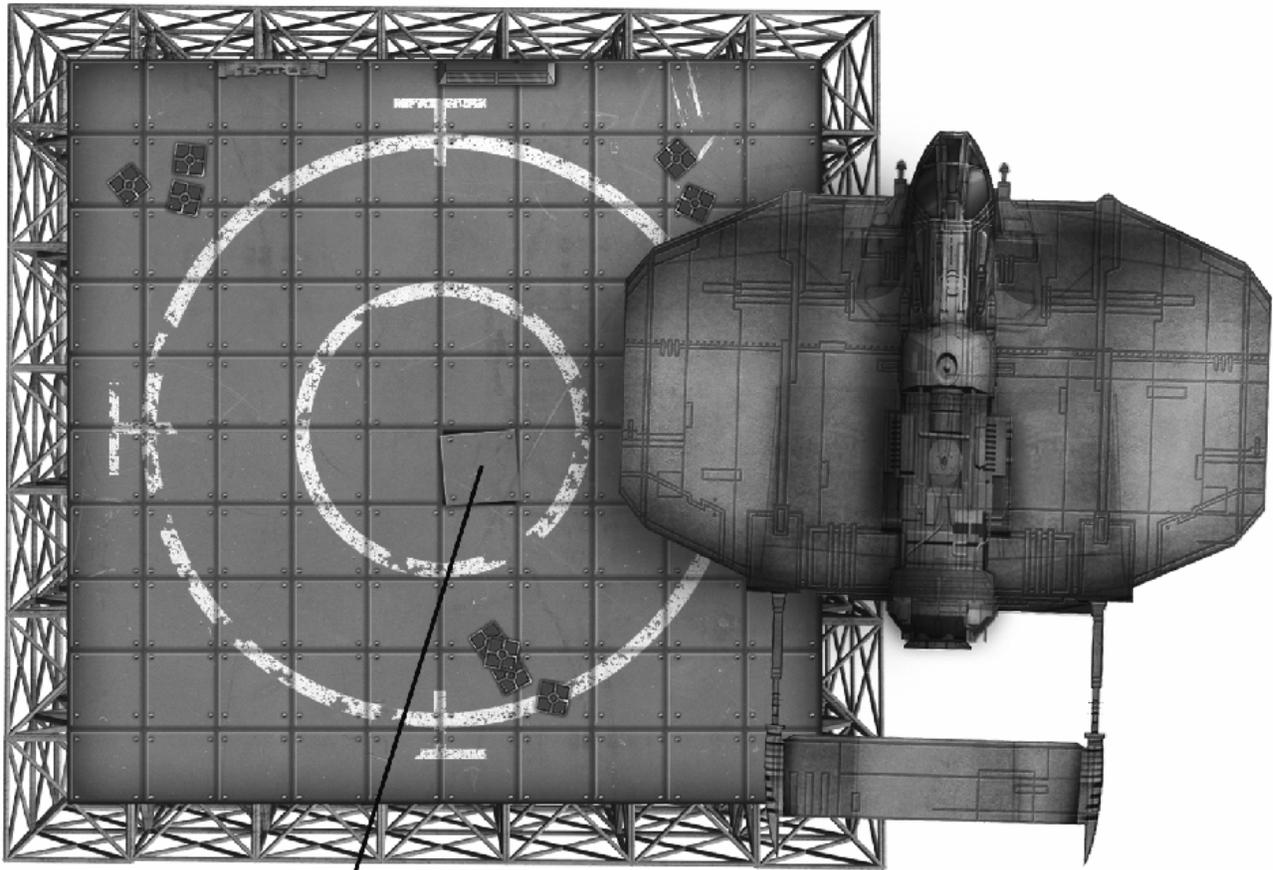
CONCLUSION

When the encounter has concluded, the heroes and their Nazren allies control the city, the rogue fragment tracking center, and the construction on Mount Antas. Any remaining Imperial forces evacuate or surrender, and reports begin to come in of Nazren seizing control in smaller outposts and settlements. Between the tracking center and the planetary shields and turbolasers (which they can complete), the Nazren can make retaking their planet too costly for the Empire.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of the area on page 26.

POINT GOLD ENCOUNTER MAP



**LOOSE
PLATE**

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Vril Vrakth has a cloakshape fighter with an open cockpit docked on the southern edge of a construction platform. The fighter is datalocked and cannot be used in the battle; even a data slicer would need too much time to crack it. However, in the cockpit is the control system with which Vrakth gives override orders to the crab droids. With a DC 15 Use Computer check, a hero could send an override command, controlling a droid's action each round (a move action) or resetting which targets it considers hostile (a standard action), thus allowing it to make its own decisions.

There is a framework all around the construction platform, which requires a DC 10 Climb check to move around in. The

framework extends above the platform, starting 6 meters higher, so characters can jump up to it or climb to a higher vantage point (and potentially jump down). However, the area is quite open, and there's very little cover to allow a Stealth check unless Vrakth is distracted.

One square of the platform has a loose plate that a character might fall through. Vrakth arranged this as a simple trap if he's rushed; he and the crab droids avoid that square. Any hero stepping on it must make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or fall at least 9 meters and take 3d6 points of falling damage. In addition, anyone who falls through must make a Climb check to get back up to the platform.

Event Name: _____ Event Code: _____
(This number was given to the senior GM when the event was sanctioned.)

Adventure Title: The First to Strike (Dawn of Defiance, Part 5) Session Number: _____
(For administrative use only.)

Date of Play: / /
Month Day Year

Start Time: :
Hour Minute

Give hour in military time standard (p.m. hours = hour +12). Don't record the exact minute the adventure played. Instead list the closest 30-minute interval the game was scheduled to start at (30 or 00).

A legal RPGA table has no less than four players, and no more than six players.

Player Name	RPGA Number
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SESSION TRACKING

GAMEMASTER

DM Name: _____

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