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Darfur: Genocide in the 21st Century

Victoria Goff

University of Rhode Island, victoria.e.goff@gmail.com

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Text (as written on board):

***“First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a communist;
Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a socialist;
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a trade unionist;
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a Jew;
Then they came for me--
and there was no one left to speak out for me.”***

–Martin Niemöller on the Holocaust

The conflict in Darfur has been called the “world’s worst humanitarian crisis” by the United Nations. The United States has condemned the war as genocide. But nearly four years after it began, the death toll of 200,000 continues to rise. At least another 2.5 million have been displaced, and neighboring countries have declared a state of emergency. Unless something is done to stop the violence, the chaos will continue to spread. This display seeks to inform about the atrocities in Darfur, using information from the news media, scholars and involved organizations.

Frustrated with lack of representation in the government, rebel groups from Darfur, the western region of Africa’s largest country Sudan, revolted against its national government in 2003. The Arab-dominated government responded by bombing African rebel headquarters, but then it turned on its own people. The military began bombing villages, kept by civilians of the same tribes as the rebels. The government is also suspected of arming the janjaweed – Arab militias – to terrorize the population through tactics of murder, rape, larceny and destruction of natural resources. To understand the origins of the conflict, the geography, people and history need to be examined.

Geography

There are three political regions in Darfur, each with its own capital: North Darfur, El Fasher; West Darfur, Geneina; and South Darfur, Nyala. The entire Darfur area borders Libya, Chad and the Central African Republic.

The rest of Sudan is surrounded by six other African countries: Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea. It also borders the Red Sea, linking it to the Middle East. Sudan has a strong Arab influence because of its close location to Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Iraq.

The Nile River crosses north to south through the center of Sudan. It also flows by the capital Khartoum, in northern Sudan. The north is dry desert, and the south is a tropical climate. The majority of oil sites are also in southern areas.

Darfur is mostly a dry climate with sandy plains and mountains. It has two distinct land forms: the Libyan Desert and the Marra Mountains. Darfur's highest point is the extinct volcano Jebel Marra (10,131 feet).

Sudan's rainy season is from June to September, but the land is still vulnerable to severe droughts. The rivers surrounding Jebel Marra make it the best agricultural site in Darfur. Camel-herding is popular in northern Darfur's desert conditions, while raising cattle is more efficient in southern Darfur.

People

Before the conflict began, it was estimated that six million people from 40 to 90 tribes lived in Darfur. African and Arab groups inhabit the region; nearly all are Muslim.

The Fur, an African tribe that ruled the region for more than a century during the 1800s, is the largest group overall in Darfur. Other African tribes in Darfur are the Tunjur and Zaghawa in North Darfur, the Masalit in West Darfur, and the Berti and Birgid in eastern areas.

Arabs began to arrive in significant numbers to Darfur during the 1300s. Those who moved to the northern areas became camel-herders, known as *Abbala*. Other groups settled in southern areas and herded cattle. The Arab cattle-herding groups, called as *Baggara*, include the Ta'aisha, Beni Halba, Habbaniya and Rizeigat tribes. Some of Darfur's history is different from the rest of Sudan's. The region wasn't incorporated into Sudan until Mahdist rule during the late 1800s. After the Mahdist state, Darfur was independent again, until it was annexed to Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian condominium in the early 1900s. After Sudan gained independence in the 1950s, its northern and southern regions warred against each other, overshadowing Darfur's problems. Below is a brief history of Darfur and Sudan. Problems of suppressive regimes that didn't represent the population, poor development in the west and south, and power struggles between national leaders are common themes:

Timeline of governments

Some of Darfur's history is different from the rest of Sudan's. The region wasn't incorporated into Sudan until Mahdist rule during the late 1800s. After the Mahdist state, Darfur was independent again, until it was annexed to Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian condominium in the early 1900s. After Sudan gained independence in the 1950s, its northern and southern regions warred against each other, overshadowing Darfur's problems. Below is a brief history of Darfur and Sudan. Problems of suppressive regimes that didn't represent the population, poor development in the west and south, and power struggles between national leaders are common themes:

1630 – 1874: The Fur Sultanate

Dar Fur means “land of the Fur.” The Fur tribe – African farmers who settled around Jebel Marra during the 1300s – established its rule in 1630. Sulayman Solong, Darfur’s first sultan, welcomed Islam and declared it the state’s official religion. Islam became more popular during the rule of Ahmad Bakr, who introduced teachers, built mosques and required Darfur inhabitants to be Muslims. Both Fur and Arabic were spoken at court and written in scholarship. Although Darfur was an African state, Arabs were incorporated into society.

By 1800, Darfur was the most powerful state within Sudan’s modern borders. It had a thriving trade economy, largely based on agriculture and slavery. However, the desertification process of the Sahara Desert over time has decreased the amount of cultivatable land in Darfur.

**While the Fur Sultanate ruled Darfur, the Funj Sultanate controlled the rest of Sudan. The two regimes clashed over Kordofan, a Funj-controlled area bordering Darfur on the east.*

1884 – 1899: The Mahdist State

The Mahdi is a Muslim messiah believed to eliminate evil from the world. Since the belief of the Mahdi was established in the 10th century, many people have claimed to be the messiah. Some Muslims think that the Mahdi has already lived, while others believe he has yet to come.

The Mahdist revolution in Darfur was led by Muhammed Ahmad, a self-proclaimed messiah from northern Sudan. Ahmad and his followers established rule in Darfur and in Sudanese territory that was controlled by Egypt. This included Omdurman, the largest city in modern Sudan, and Khartoum. Both are in northern Sudan.

Ahmad died from typhus in 1885, six months after he seized Khartoum. Abdallahi ibn Muhammad – a Baggara Arab from southern Darfur – succeeded Ahmad as the caliph, or Muslim leader. Conditions under Abdallahi deteriorated, as he continued to use Ahmad’s jihad policy to create a greater Islamic state. The policy forced him to reject peace deals, including one with Ethiopia that would have allied the two states against the Europeans.

In 1889 the Mahdists invaded Egypt, whose fiscal affairs were managed by Great Britain. The British helped Egypt because it wanted control of the Suez Canal –connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea – for trade interests. The Anglo-Egyptian force defeated the Mahdists, and sought to capture Sudan (before the Mahdist state it was controlled by Egypt). The military, led by British commander Herbert Kitchener, took control of Sudan in 1899. But Darfur didn’t immediately become part of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium; instead the Fur Sultanate was re-established.

1899 – 1916: Ali Dinar; Return of the Fur Sultanate

Ali Dinar – a Fur of royal ancestry – re-established the Fur Sultanate after the Anglo-Egyptian force overthrew the Mahdists. Dinar was allowed to rule Darfur under the condition that he paid annual tribute to the khedive, Egypt’s ruler.

Dinar governed the region for 18 years. But Darfur was unstable after the Mahdist revolt. The economy was ruined. Many had died from disease, persecution and warfare. Arab tribes that had moved east during Mahdist rule returned to Darfur. But African and Arab tribal members were divided concerning their beliefs in the Mahdi and orthodox Islam. To make conditions worse, there was a severe drought in 1913. Greatness was not restored to the region.

Dinar lost the throne after he miscalculated an Ottoman victory in World War I. He declared to participate in a jihad (holy war) against the Allies, and the British responded by invading Darfur. After Dinar died in warfare, Darfur was annexed to Sudan.

1916 – 1956: The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium

Officially Britain and Egypt controlled Sudan, but primarily the British managed the area. When the British formulated its policies in Sudan, it assumed Arabs were superior to Africans. This resulted in the neglect of Darfur and other areas surrounding Khartoum. Sennar, a city south of Khartoum on the Blue Nile, became the center of cotton cultivation, the heart of Sudan's economy. It was connected with northern Sudan by railroad and telegraph lines, but Darfur and southern areas were not included.

Many Darfurians became migrant laborers because of the lack of economic investment in the region. Social services were not developed in Darfur. Under British rule, there was no maternity clinic and schooling was limited. When Sudan became independent in 1956, Darfur has the lowest number of hospital beds compared to other regions of the country.

1956 – 1958: The Supreme Commission Government

Who was in power:

Prime Minister Abd Allah Khalil

Coalition government between the Umma and People's Democratic Party

**The Umma party included moderates who wanted Sudanese independence with British cooperation. The PDP has sometimes been described as supporting Arab-nationalist policies; many of its members were from a pro-Egyptian party.*

Government description:

Head of state: Five-member Supreme Commission; prime minister

Parliament: Indirectly-elected Senate; popularly-elected House of Representatives

Temporary "Transitional Constitution"

How the government came to power:

Elected by the population

Government highlights:

The Sudanese government relied too heavily on its cotton industry, as it was the main source of income. When the government rose its cotton price above others in the global market, it resulted in a low number of sales. Cattle and camel-herders also suffered a setback when Egypt placed an embargo on Sudanese imports. The rocky relationship between the countries was fueled by ownership disputes over Nile River land.

To help solve Sudan's economic problems and promote development, the Umma party wanted to receive more foreign aid. However, the PDP didn't want to rely on foreign aid because it objected outside influence. Nevertheless, Khalil signed an agreement in 1958 with the United States, who would help develop and extend Sudan's transportation and communications system.

Popularity of Sudan's Supreme Commission government declined as social, political and economic problems worsened. Protestors demonstrated in Khartoum against the government. On Nov. 17, 1958, two army generals took over the civilian government in a military coup.

1958 – 1964: Gen. Ibrahim Abbud Military Regime

Who was in power:

Army Gen. Ibrahim Abbud; Gen. Ahmad Abd al Wahab

Government description:

Military dictatorship

Supreme Council of the Armed Forces served as the executive body

Population was not involved in decision-making process

No civilians in authoritative positions

How the government came to power:

Military coup

Government highlights:

- No permanent constitution: Created constitutional commission – led by state chief justice – but no success
- Economy: Improvement in marketing the cotton crop; but economy and social development still lagging
- Sudan-Egypt relations: Improved; settled Nile River dispute
- A divided army: Three coup attempts in 1959 made by military officers to establish more popular government
- Sudanese Communist Party: Supported coups above; improved its reputation
- Arab-dominated government: Christian missionaries expelled from south; other cultural differences in south suppressed

1964 – 1969: Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub; the Re-establishment of the Supreme Commission

Who was in power:

1964 – 1965: Prime Minister Sirr al Khatim al Khalifa

1965 elections:

Supreme Commission President Ismail al-Azhari

Prime Minister Muhammed Ahmad Mahjub

1966: Disagreement between Mahjub and Azhari about who should control foreign affairs; Mahjub resigns; new Umma leader Sadiq al Mahdi becomes prime minister

1967 elections: Mahjub became prime minister, dissolved parliament because of Sadiq's influence in the government body. Sadiq refused to recognize Mahjub's

decision, continued to operate parliament. Two governments operated in Sudan until the Supreme Court sided with Mahjub.

Government description:

Re-establishment of Supreme Commission government (1956 – 1958)

Temporary “Transitional Constitution”

How the government came to power:

October Revolution of 1964

In response to economic and educational problems, the National Front of Professionals – teachers, students, civil workers and unionists – led nationwide riots. The demonstrations lasted for days and many deaths resulted. In response, Abbud dissolved the government and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. A coalition government modeled after 1956’s Supreme Commission was formed and Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa, a non-affiliated political party civilian servant, was appointed as prime minister.

In 1965 national parliamentary elections were held, but there was a low voter turnout and large number of candidates. The elections were almost postponed because of security problems in the south, but the Supreme Commission held them anyway. It disadvantaged political parties the PDP and SCP, so they boycotted the elections. For those who did vote, the Umma and National Unionist Party captured the legislative seats. Mahjub (Umma) was appointed prime minister and Azhari (NUP) became the Supreme Commission’s president.

Government highlights:

- No permanent constitution
- Problems in the south: Mahjub used violent force to solve problems in the South. To crush southern rebellions, he used the army to burn villages and churches, close schools, and destroy agriculture. The problem worsened and thousands fled to neighboring countries.
- Elimination of communists: Parliament approved Mahjub’s proposal to eliminate SCP members from the government

1969 – 1985: The Jaafar Nimeiri Era

Who was in power:

Army Col. Jaafar Nimeiri

Revolution Command Council: Ten-member body operated under Nimeiri’s approval until 1971

Government description:

Military dictatorship

How the government came to power:

Military coup

Government highlights:

- During Nimeiri’s first two years of power, he abolished the transitional constitution and outlawed political parties. However he had declared to establish a socialist state, so SCP members were used to form government policies. But after Nimeiri placed communist trade unions under government control, the SCP attempted a coup in 1971. To make his regime appear as a democratic socialist state as he had promised, Nimeiri dissolved the RCC and was elected to a six-year presidential term.

- Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972: Temporarily gave the south regional autonomy
- Oil discovered in the south during the 1970s; Nimeiri attempted to redraw north-south boundaries so oil-rich areas would be in the north
- Draft constitution in 1973: Presidential government; Sudan Socialist Union is the sole political organization; Islam is official religion; regional autonomy for the south
- 1983: Instituted the sharia (Islamic law); official civil war between the north and south begins

\$9 billion in international debt

1985: The Transitional Military Council

Who was in power:

Gen. Abd ar Rahman Siwar adh Dhahab
Transitional Military Council of 15 members

Government description:

Military rule promised to restore a civilian government in one year

How the government came to power:

Military coup

Government highlights:

- Suspended Nimeiri's constitution
- Dissolved Nimeiri's government institutions, including the SSU
- The sharia continued to be Sudanese law
- Famine in southern and western Sudan areas

1986 – 1989: The Sadiq al Mahdi government

Who was in power:

Prime Minister Sadiq al Mahdi
Four different coalition governments in three years

Government description:

Prime minister
Parliament

How the government came to power:

General elections in 1986 as promised by Dhahab

Government highlights:

- Corruption; scandals; political instability
- The sharia continued to be Sudanese law
- Ineffective in aiding famine areas and reducing international debt
- The north-south civil war: Increased use of Arab militias against rebels and southern African civilians

1989 – Present: Omar al-Bashir's government

Who is in power:

President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir

Vice Presidents Salva Kiir and Ali Osman Taha
Coalition between Bashir's National Congress Party (majority) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement, as outlined by 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended north-south civil war

Government description:

1989 – 1993: Bashir serves as prime minister, chairman for the Revolution Command Council for National Salvation (ruling body of Sudan)

1993 – 1996: RCC-NS appoints Bashir as president

1996: Bashir elected president; serves as chief of state and head of government

How the government came to power:

Military coup

The beginning of the war

In 2003, a joint African rebel force of the Sudan Liberation Army and Justice and Equality Movement attacked a military air base in El Fasher. At least 75 government military officials and workers were killed, while the rebels lost nine. Before the attack, the Sudanese army had already been trying to quell the Darfurian rebels, but it was losing. The humiliation of the government's defeat in El Fasher made Darfur a top priority for Khartoum.

Instead of negotiating, the Sudanese government focused on a military solution. Since its ground troops were failing against the rebel's guerrilla tactics in the desert, the military used its air force to bomb rebel headquarters. The government began arming the janjaweed to terrorize Darfurians. Bashir denies backing the janjaweed, but numerous sources, including former janjaweed fighters, claim the Arab militias operate under government control. The strategy is to bomb villages, and then send in the janjaweed to destroy the remains.

The janjaweed

The Darfur conflict isn't the first time the government has used Arab militias. Members from Arab tribes – including prison inmates – were recruited for a counterinsurgency force in the 1980s and 1990s against southern Sudanese rebels. The militiamen were promised land and goods they could steal from African villages. After Nimeiri was overthrown in 1985, Baggara Arabs were given arms and military support to terrorize southern African tribes suspected of supporting the SPLM/A. The government's use of the militias became public knowledge in 1987 when they shot and burned 1,000 African Dinka tribal members. The Arab militias operated similarly to the janjaweed in Darfur. They burned villages, killed civilians and raped women – all with the support of military aerial bombings and government intelligence.

The Sudanese government denies supporting the janjaweed, and Bashir promised to disarm the militias in 2004. But almost three years later, the janjaweed continues to murder men, women and children, leaving the bodies to rot in the sun. The survivors are left to move to crowded refugee camps. Not only are their homes destroyed and

belongings stolen, but their crops are burned. The janjaweed also steals cattle or kills what it can't take. Starvation may be a less bloody strategy, but it's still a killer.

The words of a janjaweed member

The BBC published an interview with a former janjaweed fighter in October. The man, who now lives in London, affirmed the government's support of the militias, their tactics and victims:

- "I tell you one fact. The janjaweed don't make decisions. The orders come from the government."
- "Whenever we go into a village and find resistance we kill everyone. Sometimes they said wipe out an entire village...We hear kill! Kill! Kill! And we shoot to kill."
- "Innocent people running out and being killed including children. And those who escape will die of thirst."

The rebels

Before rebel groups in Darfur revolted against the government, tribes organized self-defense units for attacks against Arab militias. African villages were raided by Arab tribes, supported by the Arab Gathering. The organization is an Arab-supremacist movement, which has published propaganda calling for the elimination of "zurga" (slang for blacks). After the government didn't take action to stop and condemn the attacks, the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa tribes began arming themselves for protection.

Africans were also discriminated directly by the government. In the army, Arabs received two vacations per year, while Africans only had one. During Nimeiri's rule, Masalit Khamis Abakir worked as a Sudanese security officer in the Middle East for eight years. When he returned in 1994, Bashir's government denied Abakir the money that he had earned while working abroad. He demonstrated in Khartoum, only to receive two nights in jail.

One of the main protests against the Sudanese government was The Black Book, distributed in Khartoum in May 2000. The book's anonymous authors called themselves the "Seekers of Truth and Justice" and demanded fairness and equality for Darfur. The book published that government positions were held by people who represented about 5 percent of Sudan's population. It also criticized Bashir's jihad policy as propaganda for the north and Arab supremacy, arguing that most of Sudan's Muslim martyrs were from Darfur and Kordofan.

The SLA and JEM, tired of Darfur's marginalization, formed and revolted against the government. Abakir, who became an SLA commander, emphasized that the rebels' problems were with Khartoum, not with the Arabs. The government was also suspected of supporting the Arab militias, which were led by Musa Hilal, leader of the Arab Gathering.

The words of the rebels

“Why am I working for the government?
I am not working for the money.
I am working for my community.”

*-Khamis Ahmad Osman
Former Sudanese Army sergeant turned SLA fighter*

“Arabs pass examinations; Africans do not.
My Arab friends became officers; I did not.
Arab police are kept in towns.
African police are sent to villages,
where salaries come late.
If you go to the town to protest you are told:
‘Who ordered you to come here? Go back!’”

*-Ali Yaqub Idriss,
Member of a Sudanese police force for 12 years*

There are a variety of factors that contributed to the present conflict in Darfur. The region's climate makes it prone to droughts, sometimes resulting in famine. But President Omar-al Bashir's government doesn't provide enough aid to the area, nor has it developed Darfur's social services and economy so the region can be efficiently self-reliant. Darfur was also neglected in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended the 21-year civil war between northern and southern Sudan. The agreement gave more governmental power to the south, but it did not cope with the problems in Darfur.

Drought and Famine

Environmental conditions are one of the biggest contributors to the Darfur conflict. Fertile land for farming had decreased over time because of the growth of the Sahara Desert in northern Africa. The scarcity of land during droughts has caused tensions between nomadic and farming tribes within the region. The government has often responded by siding with Arab groups instead of African ones. Tribal clashes between land use also dates back to the rule of the Fur Sultans when the *hakura* system of land ownership was developed:

The origins of hakura

The sultan's court appointed hakura-holders, who were permitted to collect taxes from residents living on the land granted to them. The hakura-holder's position became hereditary, and his tribe was the dominant group of those that inhabited the land.

Hakura's impact on tribal relations

The hakura system influenced some Arab groups' animosity for African tribes. The Fur sultans granted hakura to Baggara Arabs in the south, but none were given to Abbala Arabs in the north. Although both are nomadic groups, the denial of significant land to the Abbala is one of the reasons why those members are involved in Darfur's modern conflict.

Since most of Darfur is desert, it is prone to droughts. This is problematic for the people because they are unable to produce food and many die from starvation. There have been several droughts in Darfur's history; some significant incidents are:

1913: Sultan Ali Dinar

Although Dinar governed Darfur for nearly 20 years, he inherited a lot of problems that made the region unstable. A severe drought in 1913 worsened tribal clashes over land use. Resources continued to be scarce and people were forced to migrate in search of food and water. Dinar's inability to respond to the famine contributed to his downfall in 1916.

Late-1950s: The Supreme Commission

After Sudan broke from Anglo-Egyptian rule, its biggest economic source was cotton. In 1957 Sudan sold little cotton in the global market because of the crop's low demand and its higher price over foreign competitors. The following year, poor environmental conditions decreased cotton production, hurting Sudan's economy further. The inability of the government to cope with environmental conditions and its economy led to the downfall of the coalition government.

1980s: The Zaghawa and Arab tribes

The droughts in the 1980s caused Zaghawa farmers to arm themselves against Arab herders moving on their land in search of water. But the sides were reversed in 1987 when Zaghawa tribal members moved south for resources. Arab militias attacked the tribe and those who survived moved back north. Nearly 200 had died in the fighting.

1999: Omar al-Bashir

Elderly Masalit farmer al-Haj Ismail Ishaq Omar attempted to chase animals belonging to Arab herders off his fields in January. When he attempted to do so, the herders shot and killed him, along with three other villagers in Tabarik. Two Arabs, including a village chief trying to restore order, were killed in retaliation. Khartoum not only blamed the African tribe for the Arab deaths, but declared the Masalit had assassinated all Arab leaders in Dar Masalit. Arab militias, with military air support, killed more than 2,000 people in attacks on the region. The

government's response to the incident is one of the reasons why Masalit tribal members joined the SLM/A.

North-South Civil War

Sudan's 21-year civil war, the longest in Africa, was between the Muslim north and Christian, animist south. The regions are not only different environmentally, but also culturally. For example, the north primarily speaks Arabic, but the south's dominant language is English. Most of the southerners are of African origin and do not relate to Arabization policies imposed by Khartoum in the north.

The south is also an underdeveloped region in Sudan. During Anglo-Egyptian rule, the British assumed Arabs were superior and formulated their policies around this theory. The regions were governed separately, with more technology and resources in the north. The British chose people who appealed to them, not the population, to manage local southern areas. This policy of indirect rule, also known as native administration, established a series of different customary laws and created separate identities for the people. It also hindered the south's ability to integrate into an independent Sudan.

Early southern rebellions date to 1955 when southerners feared the north would force Islamic and Arabic policies on them after the departure of the British. The Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972 temporarily stopped warfare between the north and south. But the civil war turned full-scale in 1983 when Nimeiri instituted the sharia upon the country. Southerners demanded the repeal of the Islamic laws. Some groups fought for autonomy of the south, while others wanted more representation in the government.

The people of Darfur were associated with the north in the civil war. Nearly half of Sudan's national army is from Darfur. Scholars reason the Sudanese government played one disadvantaged group (Darfurians in the army) against another (South) to prevent the groups from taking united action against it. In the present Darfur conflict, the government relies on Arab militias instead of the national army to fight the rebels. There are too many Darfurians in the army who would be unwilling to slaughter their own people.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement granted the south an autonomous government and more representation in the national government. The sharia only applies to the north – including Darfur – and English joined Arabic as the country's official language. The south is also entitled to equally split revenues from Sudan's oil deposits. Although most of the sites are in the south, Khartoum received most of the profits. In 2011, the south will vote if it wants to remain part of Sudan or become an independent state.

The civil war is one of the reasons the conflict in Darfur has escalated. Negotiations for the peace treaty trace back to 1997, but it was finalized after pressure from world powers such as the United States. Although former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell had already called the attacks in Darfur genocide, American officials were careful about mentioning the conflict because they didn't want to harm negotiations. As a result, problems were only solved between the north and south; Darfur was never mentioned. Bashir's National Congress Party – formerly the National Islamic Front – retains majority control (52 percent) of the legislative and executive branches, while the SPLM/A

manages the rest. Northern and southern opposition parties have a small percentage, but Darfurian political parties were not awarded official representation.

Some experts say the success of the SPLM/A has inspired violence for Darfurian rebels. The southern Sudanese gained representation in the national government through an armed struggle, so couldn't rebels in Darfur do the same? But others, such as former U.N. Secretary Gen. Kofi Annan, say the peace negotiation has a positive effect on the Darfur conflict. The Sudanese government was able to negotiate with the southern population, so it will do the same with the rebels in Darfur.

As part of the peace agreement, John Garang, leader of the SPLM/A became vice president under Bashir. However, he was killed in a helicopter crash months after he took office. Fellow SPLM/A member Salva Kiir Mayardit took over the vice presidency, but Garang's death caused insecurity among southerners. Demonstrations followed in Khartoum and some speculate that it could still destabilize the peace process.

The gap between Darfur and Khartoum

The peculiar aspect of the Darfur conflict is both sides practice the same religion: Islam. Muslim janjaweed fighters are burning the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, because it belongs to African villagers. The conflict isn't a clash of tribes either; the people of Darfur don't have a homogenous tribal background. One of the reasons dates back to the hakura system. Multiple tribes lived under the same hakura-holder, eventually leading to the mixing of different tribal members.

Instead, the media and others describe Darfur as a clash between Arab and black African descent. Darfur has been neglected by the Arab-dominated government, leading it to be an economically, politically and social underdeveloped territory of Sudan. In response to the region's unrest, the government has pitted Arab tribes – many from the region who suffer the same lack of development – against the black African population. Even though the Africans in Darfur are Muslims too, they are considered second-class citizens by Khartoum. The struggle between Sudan's Arabized government and Darfur's population has been building for years:

1884 – 1899: Mahdist Rule

When Ahmad declared himself the Mahdi, he sought to create a universal Islamic state through jihad. To do so, he imposed traditional Islamic laws and used sharia courts to enforce them. Alcohol and tobacco were prohibited and women's rights were limited. Books about previous laws and theology were burned to prevent tribalism from affecting Muslim unity.

These policies clashed with the traditions of African tribes. For example, women in the Masalit tribe could be independent. Members also enjoyed dancing and drinking millet beer. But under the Mahdist reign, all of these customs were outlawed.

1987 – 1989: The Arab-Fur War

In the 1970s and 1980s, Libyan Col. Muammar Gaddafi sought to create an “Arab Belt” across northern Africa. He created a military force – the Islamic Legion – and recruited Arabs from Sudan. He annexed Chad, and the Sudanese government, led by Sadiq, allowed Gaddafi to use Darfur for military bases. In exchange, Gaddafi gave arms and oil to Khartoum for its war against southern Sudan. In the Arab-Fur War, thousands were killed and hundreds of villages were burned, until a peace treaty was signed between the tribes. But when Bashir came to power in 1989, he strengthened Sudan’s alliance with Libya. Although the official war was over, Darfur was in a chaotic state and Bashir worsened conditions by not supporting his people.

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir

Lt. Gen. Omar al-Bashir became president of Sudan in a 1989 military coup. Bashir’s regime has been described by scholars and activists as a fundamentalist dictatorship supported by the National Congress Party (formerly the National Islamic Front). It has also been reported that he harbored Osama bin Laden in Sudan during the 1990s and allowed him to conduct al-Qaeda activities there. In addition, The New York Times published last year that Bashir’s government spends 70 percent of its oil money on the military, while areas like Darfur lack essential social services.

In other Darfur-related issues, Bashir has been accused of supporting the janjaweed, expelling journalists and aid workers, blocking site access to U.N. officials, and deceiving the international community about military activities. Under his rule in 1994, Darfur was split into three sections, each with its own regional government. Some scholars say Bashir’s government did this to give Arab candidates a better chance of gaining office over Africans. For example, the Fur is the majority in Darfur overall. But after the regional division, the tribe became a minority in each area, making it harder for Fur candidates to be elected.

The refugees

Millions of displaced villagers live in crowded refugee camps in Darfur and Chad. One camp – named by the refugees “Rwanda,” after the African country’s genocide in 1994 – was reported to have no medical care, no clean water and no toilets. Malaria and diarrhea are frequent killers of children and elderly. The camp’s conditions are not unique, but representative of typical camps for refugees affected by the Darfur conflict.

And security there isn’t much more promising than in the villages. In late December, the United Nations evacuated its 71 aid workers from the Gereida refugee camp in South Darfur. The United Nations said it was forced to leave after more than 20 gunmen looted the site and harassed the staff. The camp is the largest with 130,000 refugees, but now there is no relief for them. It isn’t the only camp where security is deteriorating; the evacuation of aid workers was the United Nation’s eighth of that month.

Aid intended for refugee camps often doesn't reach its destination. The United Nations said refugees are deliberately and systematically being starved after it visited the Kailek camp in 2004. The U.N. team said militiamen guarded the camp in South Darfur and didn't allow deliveries to enter. The armed men took the rations, along with wild food the refugees had collected. More recently in September 2006, a World Health Organization vehicle with food bound for a camp in El Fasher was hijacked by rebels. These types of incidents are frequently reported and contribute to forcing aid organizations out of Darfur.

Bashir's government uses different tactics to expel aid workers from the country. One way is delay aid organizations through paperwork. Some of the travel documents workers need include:

- Visa to enter Sudan
- Travel permit to enter Darfur
- Daily travel permit to leave state capitals (there are three in Darfur alone)
- Fuel permits to travel around Darfur

Vehicles are also checked in Port Sudan, on the Red Sea coast, and frequently impounded by the government on the way to Darfur. It was also reported that UNICEF medications for refugees were seized for testing in Sudanese labs.

Workers aren't just delayed from Darfur, but sometimes they are outright expelled. One of the most notable cases is of Jan Pronk, the U.N. envoy to Sudan who has been outspoken in his criticism of the government's handling of Darfur. The Sudanese government deported Pronk in October after he wrote a blog entry about his latest visit to Darfur. Pronk wrote the Sudanese military's morale was low after it suffered defeats from Darfurian rebels. He also reported the government was supporting the janjaweed.

Journalists too are often expelled, arrested and denied access for their reports in Darfur. Reporters are told by the government not to write about human rights abuses, but for those that do there are consequences. Al Jazeera, the leading Arab television station, was closed in Sudan after it was the first media outlet to report the mayhem in Darfur. Numerous independent newspapers have been shut down; others are censored by the government. It is widely believed the government takes severe action against journalists to discourage reporting:

- Nyala correspondent Yusuf al-Bashir Musa of Khartoum's Al-Sahafa newspaper was arrested in May 2003 after he reported a rebel attack in El Fasher. He was charged with writing false information against Sudan, under the 1998 Emergency Act. Musa was beaten on his body and on the sole of his only foot. A month later, Musa was released and he filed charges. there was no punishment for the police who beat him.
- American reporter Paul Salopek of The Chicago Tribune, who was on assignment for National Geographic, was arrested and detained for more than a month in 2006 on charges of espionage and writing false news about Sudan. Salopek was crossing the Chadian border into Darfur with two Chadians, until militiamen working for the government apprehended them. Salopek didn't have a visa, but the charges were dropped after pressure from New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson,

who met with Bashir to secure the journalist's release. Richardson is also a former American ambassador to the United Nations.

Darfur's effects in neighboring countries

The conflict in Darfur has spread over the border into Chad and the Central African Republic, causing further instability in both states. Chadian rebels are fighting to overthrow their president, Idriss Déby, who they say is corrupt. Thousands of Chadians are displaced from the fighting, adding the hundreds of thousands of Darfurians who fled to Chad for refuge. The Sudanese and Chadian governments are also in conflict. Sudan accuses Chad of allowing Darfurian rebels to regroup in eastern Chadian territory, while Chad accuses Sudan of allowing Chadian rebels to use Darfur as a base.

The Central African Republic's northern region has also been affected. Former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported in November that nearly one-fourth of the country's population has been affected by the fighting in Darfur. At least 70,000 have been displaced, with 48,000 living in Chadian refugee camps. Others have few edible resources to survive.

Unlike Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic are welcoming a U.N. peacekeeping force. The United Nations sent an evaluation team two weeks ago to determine how to aid both countries. But the cost of a peacekeeping mission along the countries' borders – \$1 billion – is the same as a larger peacekeeping force the United Nations wanted to send to Darfur last year. The evaluation team will make its recommendations to the U.N. Security Council by mid-February.

Establishing peace between the rebels and Sudanese government has been difficult. Although the SLM/A and JEM are the main insurgents, there are other groups. Some are politically weak because they are divided about specific demands, and its leaders have little negotiating experience. One of the biggest problems for the rebels is that the groups are not united, even though all are revolting against Khartoum. It has been nearly impossible to establish an efficient peace treaty because not all of the rebel organizations agree to the same terms.

Problems with establishing peace

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Bashir is also a major problem in the peace process. He has continuously broken promises and resisted a U.N. peacekeeping force to help A.U. troops. Bashir has said U.N. involvement is a western plot to colonize Sudan and take advantage of its oil

resources. He also told the United Nations in September that reports of the atrocities in Darfur were fictitious and created by aid groups and Jewish organizations to raise money for themselves. Ironically, Jewish and Christian groups have been some of the most outspoken voices against the Muslim vs. Muslim violence in Darfur; Arab leaders have not pressured the sides to end the fighting.

However, there has been recent hope. Last month New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson met with Bashir and helped establish a 60-day cease-fire agreement between the government and rebels. Richardson said he thinks the agreement is a step in the right direction for negotiations. The agreement's conditions also included improvement for humanitarian aid and media access to Darfur, as well as diplomacy talks between the Sudanese government, rebels, the African Union, United Nations and other international players. Richardson's trip was sponsored by the U.S.-based activist organization, Save Darfur Coalition.

The African Union

The African Union has been unable to efficiently maintain the original cease-fire between the rebels and Sudanese government. The A.U. mission in Darfur is undermanned and under-funded. Darfur is also the first large-scale peacekeeping mission for the African Union.

The institute was formed in 2002, taking over the Organization of African Unity. It is a 53-member body that depends on the teamwork of African nations to promote peace, unity and cooperation. Its chairmanship rotates annually between member countries, with Sudan being a recent contender. Earlier this week the African Union held its first summit of 2007 and denied Bashir chairmanship for the second consecutive year, awarding it to Ghana instead. Sudan was scheduled to chair the organization in 2006, but was rejected because of the controversy in Darfur. The country was promised the position for this year if Darfur's conditions were improved, but since conditions worsened, Sudan was denied again. Recent pressure from new U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also influenced the African leaders' decision. Human rights organizations have also said it would be a conflict of interest for Sudan to lead the African Union, whose forces are trying to mediate the war in Darfur.

The African Union became involved with the Darfur conflict in 2004. Chadian President Déby began mediating talks between the Sudanese government and rebels in 2003, achieving a 45-day cease-fire agreement between the groups. However, the negotiation was not honored, and it was decided that the African Union should monitor the agreement. But the size of the African Union and its poor equipment has made it difficult for the organization to do its job. In addition, its role is to monitor; not to take sides and make peace. For example, troops are not allowed to fire at the janjaweed when they see militiamen harming villagers. Also, the African Union isn't a strong negotiating body. It doesn't have the power or resources of countries such as the United States, Great Britain and Norway, who helped achieve the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement with its leverage.

The United Nations

Last year, the United Nations decided to send a peacekeeping force in Sudan to help the African Union. After Bashir's constant rejections of a sole U.N. force during the summer, then-U.N. Secretary-General Annan helped develop the idea of an A.U.-U.N. hybrid force to police the region. U.N. peacekeeping troops would be deployed in three phases:

- **Phase 1:** 140 military and police officers; 36 armored personnel carriers; night goggles (has been put into action)
- **Phase 2:** Hundreds of U.N. military, police and civilian personnel; aircraft
- **Phase 3:** About 20,000 U.N. troops to support 7,000 A.U. troops already in Darfur

But there are problems with the U.N. plan. Only Bangladesh has committed personnel for the second phase. U.N. military forces depend on the donation of troops from member countries; there isn't a U.N. army that individuals enlist in.

After international pressure, Sudan finally accepted U.N. peacekeeping involvement in Darfur in late December. However, Sudan has not determined an exact number of U.N. troops it will allow in the third phase, nor has a specific timetable been established. Sudan has also said the majority of U.N. troops must come from African countries and the African Union must remain in charge of peacekeeping.

Analysts say the United States helped influence Sudan's decision. Just before the decision, the United States told Sudan it would place sanctions – none were specified – if it did not accept the U.N. plan. However, human rights organization criticized President Bush for not outlining specific action for Darfur in his recent State of the Union speech. Bush said in his address:

“We will continue to speak out for the cause of freedom in places like Cuba, Belarus, and Burma – and continue to awaken the conscience of the world to save the people of Darfur.”

Although Bush did not give a plan for Darfur, Richardson said January's 60-day cease-fire agreement is a step toward accelerating U.N. deployment.

However, some critics say the United Nations has not acted soon enough. The most powerful component of the United Nations is its Security Council. The Council is made of 15 member countries, 10 of which are elected by the U.N. General Assembly for two-year terms. The other five are permanent members of the Council: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China. These states were chosen to be permanent Council members because they were the most powerful at the end of World War II, when the United Nations was created. Only the permanent members have a veto power to

block decisions made about maintaining international peace and restoring peace when there is conflict – the main responsibilities of the Security Council.

China has been a controversial permanent Council member concerning Darfur. It imports 60 percent of Sudan's oil, creating a close economic relationship between the countries. China has also been reported to supply Sudan with AK-47's, helicopters and tanks, and it has established three arms factories there. Many say China's relationship with Sudan has influenced its actions on the Council about Darfur. In April, it blocked sanctions on four minor Sudanese officials. When the Security Council approved a resolution for the Sudanese government to disarm the janjaweed in 2004, China abstained. This month Chinese President Hu Jintao will visit Sudan on his African tour. Both the United States and U.N. Secretary-General Ki-moon have urged China to influence Sudan in resolving the Darfur conflict.

The United States

*"America's influence is not unlimited,
but fortunately for the oppressed,
America's influence is considerable,
and we will use it confidently in freedom's cause...
All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know:
**the United States will not ignore your oppression,
or excuse your oppressors.**"*

- President George W. Bush, Inaugural Address, January 20, 2005

President Bush has made numerous statements about the United States' duty to fight terrorism and protect freedom. Although analysts say the United States has led the international community in helping Darfur, not enough diplomatic efforts have been made to establish peace. Bush has not held a conference with other countries to create a solution for Darfur. The United States has not imposed – even named – specific sanctions on the Sudanese government or leaders named by the United Nations as human rights violators in Darfur. Bush has not met with other world leaders to establish a no-fly zone over Darfur, so the Sudanese military could no longer bomb civilian villages. Bush also didn't prioritize Darfur in his State of the Union speech this year.

These are some criticisms of the U.S. government by New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof, who won a Pulitzer Prize last year for his coverage of the genocide. Activist organizations share similar views and have called upon Bush to take more action based on his promises. For example, the Save Darfur Coalition completed a six-month campaign titled "Million Voices for Darfur." One million postcards were sent to Bush with the following content:

Dear President Bush,

During your first year in the White House, you wrote in the margins of a report on the Rwandan genocide,

"Not on my watch."

I urge you to live up to those words by using the power of your office to support a stronger multinational force to protect the civilians of Darfur.

Analysts say diplomatic efforts from the United States would help establish peace, as shown with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the north-south civil war. The U.S. government did send an envoy in May to establish a peace agreement between the Sudanese government and the largest rebel faction. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick helped guide the Darfur Peace Agreement, overseen by the African Union. The deal called for the disarmament of the janjaweed, inclusion of rebel groups in the national army and buffer zones around refugee camps.

However, only one faction of the SLM/A – led by Zaghawa tribal member Minni Minnawi – signed the agreement. Although Minnawi's wing is the largest rebel group, the other section of the SLM/A and the JEM refused to sign. Fighting erupted between the Fur and Minnawi's tribe because of the Fur's opposition to the deal. Many have also called Minnawi a sell-out for accepting the agreement. In addition, the deal's deadlines were not met, and Zoellick has since resigned from the Bush administration. The Darfur Peace Agreement was a step, but the violence continued without immediate and substantial follow-up efforts from the United States.

*"But some governments will be timid in the face of terror.
And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will."*

-President George W. Bush, State of the Union 2002

Main Entry: **geno•cide**

Pronunciation: 'je-n&-'sId

Function: *noun*

: the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group

- **geno•cid•al** /'je-n&-'sI-d&l/ *adjective*

Main Entry: **ethnic cleansing**

Function: *noun*

: the expulsion, imprisonment, or killing of an ethnic minority by a dominant majority in order to achieve ethnic homogeneity

** Definitions from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*

Darfur and international justice

After World War II, the United Nations was created to promote peace and cooperation between countries. It is an international organization that depends on the teamwork of its

192 member countries to make decisions and take action. To prevent another atrocity like the Holocaust, the organization created the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” in 1948. The Genocide Convention, which was enacted in 1951, defines the crime against international law as:

“any of a number of acts committed with the **intent to destroy**, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group: **killing** members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; **deliberately inflicting** on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to **prevent births** within the group, and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

Darfur has not been called genocide by the United Nations, although a U.N. commission in 2005 did find individuals “may commit acts with genocidal intent.” The commission also reported the attacks against mostly civilians were crimes against humanity and were carried out systematically and deliberately. But if the United Nations declared the atrocities in Darfur to be genocide, then it would need to take more immediate and substantial action.

But don’t some of Darfur’s events match the Genocide Convention’s definition? Musa Hilal, leader of the janjaweed, has written about his desire to eliminate the black African race in documents. The Sudanese government is believed to assist Hilal’s militias, which kill, mutilate and rape civilian Africans. The janjaweed also destroys crops and kills cattle to systematically and deliberately starve the people, as the U.N. commission discovered.

These events cannot be completely ignored by the international community. Individuals – including Sudanese officials – accused of carrying out genocidal attacks may be brought justice in the International Criminal Court, also known as the Hague. The I.C.C. was created by the United Nation’s Rome Statute in 1998 to prevent crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes, and to prosecute such crimes.

Last year the U.N. Security Council referred the Darfur commission reports to the I.C.C. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the Court’s chief prosecutor, is building a case against the individuals, but it may take years. The Sudanese government refuses to cooperate, so Moreno-Ocampo has little access to forensic evidence. Much of the case relies on testimony and its relevance to governmental decisions.

In addition, an I.C.C. case is inadmissible if a state’s government is carrying out its own investigation. Shortly after the Court decided to investigate Darfur, Sudan initiated the Darfur Special Criminal Court. This is a traveling court of three men and is believed to have been created to curtail Moreno-Ocampo’s investigations.

Ironically, even though former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell declared the Darfur atrocities genocide in 2004, the United States is not bound to the I.C.C. The U.S. government did not sign the Court’s agreement because it doesn’t approve of an I.C.C.

prosecutor initiating a case. (Other ways include a government's invitation or a referral by the Security Council). President Bush called it an "unaccountable prosecutor" in his 2004 presidential campaign; however, it should be noted that the prosecutor is held responsible by a panel of international judges. However, the United States didn't block Darfur's referral to the I.C.C. by the Security Council.

Darfur is not the first, will it be the last?

Experts estimate that genocides have occurred in 16 different countries since the Holocaust, but not all have been recognized by the United Nations. Some of the most documented genocides of the previous century are:

The Holocaust: 1939-1945

Perpetrator: The Nazis, led by Adolf Hitler

Targets: Jews, Gypsies, Germans who were mentally impaired or physically disabled, homosexuals, Soviet prisoners of war

Amount killed, displaced: 5.6 million to 5.9 million Jews killed

What happened: After Germany was humiliated from its defeat in World War I, Hitler used Jews as a scapegoat. He promised to restore greatness to Germany, and to do so, the Jewish race needed to be exterminated so only the Aryan race would exist. Target groups were moved from their homes, often placed in concentration camps where victims were starved, gassed and cremated.

Cambodia: 1975-1979

Perpetrator: The Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot

Targets: Intellectuals, merchants, bureaucrats, people suspected of disagreeing with the Khmer Rouge, members of minority and religious groups

Amount killed, displaced: 1.7 million Cambodians killed

What happened: The Khmer Rouge, a communist party, took over the government in a military coup. After being controlled by the French and threatened by the Vietnamese, the Khmer Rouge sought to eliminate foreign influence in Cambodia. People who weren't from the Khmer race were expelled or killed. Those who lived in the city were moved to the countryside to perform agricultural labor, but they were underfed and overworked. Religion was also banned. The educated were also targeted in an effort to make everyone in society homogenous.

Bosnia: 1992-1995

(Third war of Yugoslavia secession)

Perpetrator: Three-sided nationalist struggle between Bosniak (Muslim Slav), Croat and Serb ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bosnian Croat and Serb groups were supported from recently independent Croatia and Serbia respectively

Targets: Anyone who wasn't of the same ethnic group; i.e. Serbs fought Bosniaks and Croats

Amount killed, displaced: 200,000 killed; 2.3 million refugees

What happened: Yugoslavia was a union—modeled after the U.S.S.R.—of six republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. After Josip Broz Tito—the communist founder and leader of Yugoslavia after World War II—died in 1980, the federation faced economic and political hardships. Slovenia and Croatia broke from Yugoslavia in 1991 because they blamed their economic problems on the less-developed member states. Bosnia also wanted to secede from Yugoslavia, but the three ethnic groups fought for control (none were a majority). Each group tried to unite territories they controlled and committed mass murders against different ethnicities.

Rwanda: 1994-1996

Perpetrator: Ethnic group Hutu

Targets: Ethnic group Tutsi

Amount killed, displaced: 500,000 to 1 million killed; 1.2 million refugees

What happened: Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu, was killed when his plane was shot down. No responsibility for the attack was established, but the event spurred a violent war of ethnic cleansing. The United Nations condemned the Rwandan army, dominated by the Hutu, for committing genocide against the Tutsi. Many of the refugees fled to Zaire (presently the Democratic Republic of Congo). In 1996, Hutu militias in the refugee camps led attacks to overthrow the Rwandan government, which was controlled by the Tutsi and moderate Hutu. Hutu militias, backed by the Zairian government, and Tutsi rebels, supported by the Rwandan government, fought another ethnic war. Thousands more refugees were killed or died from disease.

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