

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Washington



**Crisis in Darfur – The Forgotten Genocide**

Nicole L. Adenauer

(Intern)

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Washington

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Washington  
2005 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
USA

Tel. +1-202-464-5840  
Fax. +1-202-464-5848  
office@kasusa.org  
www.kasusa.org  
www.kas.de

## Historical Background

In 2004 the UN labeled the situation in Darfur the “worst humanitarian crisis” in the world. The Darfur Region of the Sudan borders Libya, Chad and the Central African Republic. The crisis has spilled across the border into Chad and threatens relations between the two countries as the government-backed Janjaweed are also attacking refugee camps that dot the permeable Chad-Sudanese border.



The current crisis in the Sudanese region of Darfur began in 2003 when the non-Arab African majority attacked the Arab minority because of the perceived preferential treatment of the Arabs by the Sudanese government. Contention often centered on rights and access to farmland and water, as these are scarce resources. The Sudanese government took action to stop the uprising, which has since gotten out of control due to the Janjaweed. To the outside observer all of these individuals

appear to be “African,” but problems emerge when trying to classify who is ‘Arab’ and who is considered a ‘non-Arab.’ Virtually all of these people are Muslim, and the Sudan is governed under Islamic Law (Shari’a). Thus, the conflict in Darfur is primarily along ethnic rather than religious lines.

## Ethnic Cleansing vs. Genocide: Ethnic & Religious Boundaries

According to the UN, ethnic cleansing is the “forced evacuation, relocation or intentional displacement of a group of people, differentiated based on their ethnic origin or heritage,” and was officially condemned in 1992 by the UN General Assembly.<sup>1</sup> This is a newer term, only coming into the vernacular in the 1990s after the events in the

<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 47/80 16 December 1992. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r080.htm>

former Yugoslavia. Noticeably absent from this definition is any mention of religion. Genocide is defined by the UN as ‘acts committed with intent to destroy *in whole or in part* a national, ethnic, racial or religious group,’ encompasses the definition of ethnic cleansing to a greater extreme.<sup>2</sup> The UN definition is intentionally vague. The phrase ‘in whole or in part,’ allows the UN to act preemptively to prevent conflicts from degenerating into disasters. If the determination is made by a UN investigative body that genocide is occurring, it becomes the UN’s responsibility to intervene—thus clarifying the difficulties in providing a clear-cut definition or identifying a situation in progress.

The US government stands alone in describing the Darfur crisis as genocide, and many oppose such a qualification. Whether the label genocide or ethnic cleansing is used also affects relations with the Sudanese government, which of ten blocks international aid in protests of the classification by Western governments and NGOs.<sup>3</sup>

Disagreement also emerges when discussing the number of displaced individuals, especially the deceased, resulting from the conflict in Darfur. The conflict is no longer self-contained within the Sudanese borders. As more refugees seek assistance in neighboring Chad, accessibility widens and more people can be counted. Of course, the cited figures of how many people have actually died vary widely—by almost 200,000 between some organizations.<sup>4</sup> Over 2 million people are categorized as ‘displaced persons’ due to this conflict, unless they are able to cross a national border and may then become ‘refugees.’ Juxtaposed to the population of 40 million people living in Sudan, the percentage of displaced persons is less than 1%, but when compared to the actual population of the Darfur region—around 6 million—it is clear that these are astonishing numbers of people who have been affected by the situation.<sup>5</sup> *Doctors without Borders* reports that 1 in every 3 Darfurians has been displaced as a result of this conflict, since 2003.

---

<sup>2</sup> UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide – 9 December 1948, Article 2

<sup>3</sup> The situation in Darfur will be referred to as an example of ‘genocide’ throughout this text, although disputed, because of the striking similarities it bears to the official definition as outlined by the UN Convention of 1948.

<sup>4</sup> See Table on pg. 3

<sup>5</sup> World Food Programme cites that they will feed 3.5 million people, over half the region’s population <http://www.wfp.org/english/?ModuleID=137&Key=1327>; Population of Sudan according to CIA World Factbook Sudan [www.cia.gov/cia/ications/factbook/geos/su.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/ications/factbook/geos/su.html)

## Refugee vs. Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

Refugees are commonly referred to as individuals who are seeking asylum in a foreign country to escape persecution from their government. Unlike an Internally Displaced Person (IDP), refugees enjoy rights and protection under international law. IDPs, in contrast, have no access to borders, displacement due to a natural disaster, internal conflicts or even planned governmental policy. The primary responsibility for these individuals comes from their national government. The support provided by international NGOs may be misconstrued as interference with domestic policy by the national government. The protection of IDPs becomes more tumultuous, as conflict may spread throughout the region where humanitarian aid is administered.

**Table:** *Estimated figures on deaths & IDPs in Darfur*<sup>6</sup>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b># Displaced</b>	<b># Dead</b>
2005	United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)	2.1 million	180,000
2005	Doctors Without Borders (MSF)	2 million (1:3 Darfurians)	Not Available
Feb 2006	Oxfam	1.65 million	Not Available
Feb 2006	Refugees International	2.2 million	400,000
Mar 2006	Amnesty International	2.5 million	200,000
Mar 2006	Genocide Intervention Network	2.5 million	400,000
Mar 2006	<i>Translating Genocide Documentary</i>	2.5 million	300,000
Mar 2006	UNICEF	2.6 million	Not Available

## Key Actors – Janjaweed, SLM & JEM

The Sudanese government provided assistance to the Janjaweed militia, comprised of local Arab tribes, to stop the uprising by the non-Arab groups. The non-

<sup>6</sup> Figures available at each individual organizations website, compiled March 2006.

Arab Africans (who are still black by most Western standards) include numerous tribes that have long called the Darfur region home. These include the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa tribes. The two main rebel groups are the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) who are closely associated with the Zaghawa and, the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM), who are associated with the Fur and Masalit.

In February 2003 the JEM and SLM attacked government forces and installations due to their perceptions of discrimination levied against them by the Sudanese government. The Sudanese response was to use outside militia to suppress the insurgency, as they distrusted most of their militia, who were native Darfurians. The Janjaweed began to terrorize the people, scorch villages and kill unarmed civilians as well. Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has called the Janjaweed “thieves and gangsters,” and denies any governmental association with the group.<sup>7</sup> Genocide cannot occur without the backing, support and funding of a government. The Janjaweed are attacking villages in military aircraft, helicopters and armored cars. These are not means of transportation that the lay person comes across on their own. It is assumed by the international community that the Sudanese government does provide support to the Janjaweed.

Presently, the Sudanese government denies that there are any acts of genocide in Darfur, and so far the UN agrees—citing only human rights violations that may only *skim* the surface definition of ‘ethnic cleansing.’ According to the Sudanese Embassy in Washington DC,

compared with documented crimes of genocide elsewhere in the world, that happened in Darfur, in spite of its gravity, does not constitute such a crime. It has not been established that any specific group has sustained any physical or mental damage or been purposely subjected to living conditions leading to its total or partial annihilation.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> “Q&A Sudan’s Darfur Conflict” BBC News 26 May 2005

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3496731.stm>

<sup>8</sup> SudaNews, Embassy News of the Republic of the Sudan, June 2005, pg. 8

<http://www.sudanembassy.org/sudannewsletter/SudaNews.pdf>

The Sudanese government also continues to deny any prior involvement or present associations with the Janjaweed.

According to one documented interview conducted by *Human Rights Watch*, the Janjaweed were given direct orders from the Sudanese government to control the uprising, although many have depicted the violence perpetrated by the Janjaweed akin to a pogrom.<sup>9</sup> The Janjaweed commonly first kill all the men in a village, then rape the women and murder or kidnap the children. The effects of the violence have been linked to miscarriages, a rapid spread of disease and pregnancies resulting from the sexual violence committed against women.

### **US Response**

The US government has not played a large role in slowing or ameliorating in Darfur over the past 3 years. However, the “Darfur Peace and Accountability Act” was passed unanimously by the US Senate in 2005, and the discourse on greater UN involvement has drawn broad bipartisan support. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton urged President Bush to “arrange for increased NATO assistance in Darfur” to “ensure the safety of the people of Darfur.”<sup>10</sup> Although President Bush also urges NATO’s involvement in Darfur, NATO cannot intervene unless the African Union asks for UN assistance. Then NATO would assist logistically and with supplies, but it is unlikely that there would be any NATO ground troops in Sudan.

Thus, the US is in a precarious situation because there is little it can do to provide assistance. Although the issue of Darfur is discussed on Capitol Hill, the US cannot intervene in the ‘domestic problem’ of Darfur until it is internationally recognized as a crime against humanity. Even thereafter, it is unlikely that US troops would ever be sent to Sudan. During the one-month US presidency over the UN Security Council, a motion was passed by the Security Council to begin the planning process to send

---

<sup>9</sup> “Darfur: Militia Leader Implicates Khartoum” *Human Rights Watch*  
<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/03/02/darfur10225.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton Calls on Pres. Bush to do more to end the genocide in Darfur 16 March 2006  
<http://clinton.senate.gov/news/statements/details.cfm?id=252800&&>

peacekeeping troops to Darfur.<sup>11</sup> Despite the passage of various resolutions, the enforcement of no-fly zones and the possibility of sending UN peacekeepers have been vehemently opposed by some Security Council members.<sup>12</sup>

The Bush administration has disagreed with the UN categorization of Darfur, but no major steps have been taken to combat the ongoing genocide, cited by the US State Department, other than strong rhetoric from journalists. Numerous NGOs have entered onto the scene to assist with basic humanitarian crisis response, but little unified action has been taken, and subsequently no pressure has been levied on other governments to effect change. The action takes place solely through collective bodies like the AU, and discussion of possible UN intervention.

The 'never again' reference, which was coined after the Holocaust, to acts of genocide has provided little assistance to the response to Darfur. The Clinton administration largely ignored the situation in Rwanda, and hundreds of thousands of Rwandans died as a result—yet, the same inaction persists a decade later. Acknowledging a problem is easier than taking action to prevent, slow down or alter the horrors at work in the Darfur Region. Excuses may be offered, but can there really be a legitimate argument as to why the first genocide of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was permitted to thrive?

President Bush made one official statement regarding Darfur in 2004 where he used authoritative language to describe the situation. He highlighted that “genocide has taken place in Darfur,” and that he had taken action with the UN Security Council to combat this problem.<sup>13</sup> Despite the passage of UN Security Council resolutions, government agencies and officials are unable to remedy the situation in Darfur. There are hundreds of thousands who are dead, and millions that are displaced resulting from this inability to act.

---

<sup>11</sup> NY Times “Security Council Agrees to Send Troops to Darfur” 4 February 2006

<sup>12</sup> China has readily stated that it will veto any resolutions to enforce ground action in the Sudan

<sup>13</sup> President’s Statement on Violence in Darfur, Sudan. 9 September 2004.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/09/20040909-10.html>

President Bush's response has been sporadic, although beginning in 2006 he has been more responsive to questions and shown a greater willingness to act. Under the subsection entitled "Promoting Democracy and Providing Humanitarian Relief" of the proposal asking for \$72.4 billion for the "Global War on Terror," more than \$500 million were earmarked for "emergency humanitarian and peacekeeping needs in Sudan and the Darfur crisis."<sup>14</sup> The situation in Darfur is becoming more volatile, and Americans are starting to take note—and inform their elected officials. Several rallies and demonstrations are planned or scheduled to take place in Washington, DC, in April 2006.

### **The African Union**

The African Union (AU) is playing a vital role in the protection of Sudanese citizens, but unfortunately their resources and capabilities are limited. The 7,000 troop force in Sudan is not only mobilized for policing the situation unfolding in Darfur, but also to ensure stability in Southern Sudan after the signing of the cease-fire and peace agreement that ended two decades of civil war. While that situation is clearly a priority, so are the atrocities that are unfolding in Darfur. The AU troops have been deployed in the Darfur Region since May 2004 as peacekeepers.<sup>15</sup> Since the AU has been unable to protect the villages, the villagers often flee with nothing other than their children in tow as soon as the Janjaweed attack—provided the villagers were able to escape at all.

The African Union Peace and Security Council granted approval to extend the mission in Darfur through September 30, 2006. The intervention by UN troops is postponed until their mandate is complete and they must wait for an invitation from the AU. Sudanese officials are vocal in their opposition to Western involvement, as they do not want the country to become another 'Iraq,' and say it is not in Sudan's best interest to have foreign troops involved in a domestic issue. President Omar al-Bashir asserted

---

<sup>14</sup> President Requests \$72.4 billion for Global War on Terror 16 February 2006  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/pubpress/2006/fact\\_sheet\\_global\\_war.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/pubpress/2006/fact_sheet_global_war.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> A peacekeeper is defined as a member of a military force that is assigned (often with international sanction) to preserve peace in a troubled area.



in March 2006 that there should not be any Western involvement, as the AU's mission work has proven a "success for Africa," although most reporters and observers disagree.<sup>16</sup>

### **The European Union**

The EU has been relatively quiet about Darfur, but it does support UN intervention. EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana met with Sudanese leaders as well as AU and UN officials to urge the Sudanese government to allow a handover to the UN for peacekeeping purposes. The AU mandate was instead extended through September 2006, but Solana did state that the EU was considering stepping up its support for the AU with possibly more logistical support or vehicles.<sup>17</sup> The EU recently approved a measure to grant 50 million euros to the AU to support their mission in Darfur.<sup>18</sup> This would fund the AU for almost three months. The only ground support that the Sudanese government will accept is outside funding for the AU, despite the calls from the EU to allow UN peacekeeping troops.

### **UN Involvement**

Support for UN intervention in the Darfur Region is growing, but often is curtailed by foreign investments in Sudan. UN Resolution 1564 was passed in September 2004, threatening oil sanctions unless the Sudanese government took action to halt the violence in Darfur. Unfortunately, China, which has approximately \$10 billion invested in the region threatened to veto any move to actually impose the sanctions.<sup>19</sup> This leads to greater contention because clearly China is blocking any action to prevent the further atrocities being committed in Darfur—although these two countries understand each other, as China has its Taiwan, and Sudan has its Darfur.

---

<sup>16</sup> Non-African Troops in Darfur risks 'Iraq' chaos – Sudan. Reuters. 21 March 2006  
[http://za.today.reuters.com/news/NewsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-03-21T085909Z\\_01\\_ALL132288\\_RTRIDST\\_0\\_OZATP-SUDAN-DARFUR-20060321.XML](http://za.today.reuters.com/news/NewsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-03-21T085909Z_01_ALL132288_RTRIDST_0_OZATP-SUDAN-DARFUR-20060321.XML)

<sup>17</sup> "EU, US push Sudan for UN mandate in Darfur" 8 March 2006. Reuters.

<sup>18</sup> "EU to give 50 mln euros to AU for Darfur" 30 March 2006, Reuters.

<sup>19</sup> "China's Role in Genocide" *The Washington Times*. 27 March 2006  
<http://washingtontimes.com/commentary/20060326-092759-1015r.htm>

The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) began in 2004 as a result of UN Resolution 1547 with the stated goal of preparing for a full-fledged UN peace support mission for the peace agreement ending the civil war between the North and South. This region has undergone two decades of fighting, and ultimately ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the two parties and since being enforced and monitored by the AU and the UN. The current job of the UNMIS is to assist the government with the implementation of the CPA. It is also dealing slightly with the situation in Darfur, as it publishes “Daily Media Reports” on its web site that summarize the events of the day from publications and other outlets of civil society.

The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has strongly criticized the response provided by the UN to the situation in Darfur. Although Darfur is at a crucial turning point, there is little action curtailing the horrific events that are a part of everyday life in this region. As the conflict continues to spill across the border into Chad, more awareness emerges simply because the problem is no longer that of the Sudanese. The villagers who managed to make their way across the border may be reclassified as ‘refugees’ and subsequently able to receive more benefits—that is if they could actually receive the benefits that most NGOs would like to make available.

In March 2006, the UN Refugee Agency reduced its 2006 budget for Sudan by 44% because there is not enough security in the region to protect the international aid workers. The amount of aid now allotted for this country is \$18.5 million, down from \$33 million allotted for 2005. As a result, those offering assistance often become prey to the militias seeking to harm the individuals the NGOs are trying to assist and protect. The most notable organization is *Doctors Without Borders (MSF)*, as they tirelessly trek through hostile territories “sending in a convoy of intrepid doctors three days a week to pull bullets out of victims.”<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, NY Times Columnist who has traveled to the Darfur region 6 times in the past 2 years, and reports extensively on the situation. “A Village Waiting for Rape and Murder” 12 March 2006. <http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F70F12F638550C718DDDA0894DE404482>



*Political Cartoon (2004)*<sup>21</sup>

### **Future Prospects**

President Omar al-Bashir has been in power in Sudan since a successful coup in 1989. The Sudan is ruled by an authoritative regime, where the non-Arab Africans (although in the majority) often are victim to the discriminatory practices of the government. This perceived discrimination has led to the volatile conflict erupting in Darfur. The Arab minority has taken control of the situation and continues to terrorize the non-Arab African villagers.

Ultimately, the government has a responsibility to its people, regardless of its denied associations to the Janjaweed. Other governments have largely ignored this issue, and people continue to die on a daily basis. Most responses have been generated through the NGOs, whose efforts to stimulate public attention have met limited success.

This is the third of crisis in the Darfur region. The Janjaweed killing men, raping women, murdering children and ultimately are shattering lives. Once the non-Arab Darfurians are either driven from their villages (if they are lucky to have survived) or killed, their possessions are looted by the Janjaweed, then the crop fields are set ablaze. The scorched earth will yield no harvest this season, and more people will

<sup>21</sup> Cartoon found through a Google Image search on a blog available at <http://growabrain.typepad.com/growabrain/politics/>

starve. These previously self-sufficient people now rely on the kindness of strangers to feed, clothe and shelter them.

The humanitarian crisis is starting to overwhelm even the best and most experienced relief agencies. Dealing with the millions of people who are in exodus is overwhelming, but being powerless to stop the violence or feed the hungry is unfathomable. Organizations, such as *Save the Children*, have decided to leave the Darfur region altogether due to the instability and violence that has endangered their workers.<sup>22</sup> Still, there are those renegades who continue to operate despite the dangers—*Doctors Without Borders* remains the largest and most operational NGO in the Darfur Region.

*Transparency is necessary in order to ensure the stability, viability and ultimate success* of any type of intervention in the region—and intervention is necessary to prevent the deaths of thousands more. Decades ago “never again” became the popular response to the Holocaust, and the phrase to prevent any future acts of genocide. The international community has a responsibility to help stop the atrocities that are occurring in Darfur, and hopefully will act upon the “never again” this time.

---

<sup>22</sup> Save the Children-UK left in 2004 after 2 of their aid workers were killed