

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

MONITOR



The Situation in Sudan and the Conflict in Darfur

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Overview

The ongoing humanitarian and political crisis in Darfur, Sudan is a complex narrative that touches on issues of race, religion, politics, economics, geography, climate, war, and human frailty. It does not exist in a vacuum, and must be viewed in the context of other national, regional, and international tensions. The story of Darfur is the story of humankind writ small: of our relationship to each other and to our planet. It is a tragedy, and the stakes are enormous worldwide.

Sudan is the 10th largest country in the world and the largest on the continent. It is nearly one-third the size of the US in area, and is home to 39.3 million people. A British colony until 1956, Sudan's independence was gained at the cost of near perpetual civil war. Khartoum is the largest city and the capital, as well as the seat of the Sudanese government led by President Omar Hassan al Bashir. Bashir and his party gained power in a military coup in 1989. Though officially an Islamic state, Sudan is 70% Sunni Muslim, 5% Christian, and 25% Animist or Indigenous Religions. (Christian and Animists predominantly reside in the Southern regions of the country). The composition of Sudan's population is thought to be 52% non-Arab or Black African, 39% Arab, and 6% other (including foreigners). Although comprised of 26 separate states, Sudan is often informally segregated into just 5 regions: Khartoum (the capital and surrounding areas), the far North along the Egyptian border, the Eastern border with Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Western region of Darfur, and the semi-autonomous South. Great inequalities exist among

the different regions with most of the wealth and power concentrated in Khartoum.

Sudan consistently ranks low on quality of life indicators: CIA Factbook estimates it has the 17th highest infant mortality rate in the world; a life expectancy of 49 years; a GDP per capita of only \$2400 with only 6.7% of its land suitable for farming. It has a very high incidence of all tropical and infectious diseases and suffers from an extreme lack of potable water and frequent droughts. Not surprisingly, the UN places the Sudan 144 out of 177 on its Development Index.

The scarcity of water in Sudan is countered by an abundance of exploitable natural resources, chiefly large tapped and untapped oil reserves, but also gold, silver, chrome, asbestos, and manganese, among others. Agriculture accounts for 80% of Sudan's work force and nearly 40% of its GDP. Surging commodities prices have created a booming economy in Sudan, concentrated primarily in and around Khartoum, despite the fact that most natural resources are located elsewhere in the country.

The current crisis in the Darfur region began with hostilities between Arab Nomadic herdsman and non-Arab African agriculturalists in an area of Western Sudan, distinguished by desertification and the resulting conflict over water and land. These hostilities flared as non-Arab tribes rebelled against the Khartoum government for its historical neglect and marginalization of the region. On the heels of a different, yet similarly-motivated rebellion that resulted in nearly 50 years of civil war between the Khartoum and

the Southern Sudan, the rebellion in Darfur was met with a strong counterinsurgency effort directed by Khartoum. Arab tribes and mercenary Janjaweed militias were armed by Khartoum and began to fight alongside traditional Sudanese government forces against the Darfur rebels. The toll on civilian populations thought to be sympathetic with the rebels has been catastrophic.

It is estimated that roughly 200,000 people have died in the Darfur crisis. In addition, Africa Action has estimated that 4.2 million citizens in Sudan are conflict-affected, including 2.6 million refugees displaced internally or in neighboring countries from the Darfur conflict alone. It is critical to understand that the realities of “displacement” belie the simple term; for some, this means a malnourished and impoverished in carceration in dangerous, disease-ridden camps. For others, it entails a life on the run from various conflicts and environmental degradation. For nearly all, it is unlikely that they will ever be able to return to their homes. This refugee crisis also affects Sudan’s neighbors where many displaced persons flee; just as Sudan is home to many conflict-affected refugees from other countries as well.

Humanitarian assistance has poured into the region, but the situation has become unsafe for aid workers themselves. Many logistical hurdles prevent critical aid from reaching civilians in and out of the camps. It has become evident that a political/military/long-term development approach to the conflict must accompany the humanitarian one. The embattled and under funded African Union has been on the ground with a limited mandate since 2004 and is in great need of international assistance. World geopolitics has slowed the response of the United Nations as it has sought to impose sanctions on Khartoum and develop a strategy for intervention. Many see the machinations involved in constructing an international response to be a reflection of current day geostrategic and economic realities on the continent and beyond (including US-China tensions and the spread of radical Islam). In 2007, a 26,000-strong hybrid AU/UN force (UNAMID) was created for deployment in January 2008. As of March 2008, efforts to raise, arm, support and fully deploy this force have been severely compromised by Khartoum’s obstruction and the difficulty of procuring funds and heavy equipment from US and other international donors. The peace process has stalled as well, as factions on both sides continue to splinter, making

a cohesive solution increasingly elusive. To add insult to great injury, the conflict has destabilized the neighboring countries of Chad and the Central African Republic.

This edition of the Monitor provides an in-depth analysis of the situation in Darfur placed in the larger context of Sudanese, African, and international political and economic realities. It incorporates a wide variety of sources in a sophisticated and nuanced summary: historical texts, world media outlets, scholarly and policy expert commentary, as well as government and NGO reports. It is intended to inform the reader about background as well as current developments in the region, seen through a multitude of perspectives and opinions from around the world and along the political spectrum. We have presented a sampling of various commentary and analyses of the issues, as well as a summary of how they and why they differ, and why this matters.

Proposed Next Steps for Darfur are also presented, as they have been characterized by a number of stakeholders from within and outside Sudan. As grim and intractable as this crisis seems, there are solutions at the international, national, community, and personal level. We hope to provide a sense of empowerment for there are many things that individuals can do to be “upstanders” rather than “bystanders” as events unfold in Sudan, in the UN, in the governments of other countries, and in corporations with stakes in the region. There are numerous well-positioned organizations actively engaging along the spectrum, and the opportunities for individuals to join in begin right here, with education and awareness of the complexities involved.

This briefing is not intended to provide all the answers, but to raise questions for further discussion and to engage the reader to explore the issues further.

A note on the sections

The Issue in Focus is intended to be read in the order in which it is presented. We recommend reading the Annotated Timeline before the Players section, or referencing it throughout your review of the subsequent sections. However, each section has been designed to serve as a stand-alone document for the purpose of future reference on specific issues.



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Note: This section is also useful to non-educators as well who are interested in discussing the issues raised in this edition of the Global Affairs Monitor, around the dinner table or water cooler. They may also be used to facilitate a Global Affairs Salon.

Classroom Companion

This companion document to the Issue in Focus provides educators with guidance to incorporate the content into classroom teaching. This component is geared toward grade 6-12 teachers, with connections across subjects and disciplines.

Contents of this Classroom Companion include:

- Student readings
- Discussion questions
- Lesson Ideas/Curriculum
- Additional Resources
- National Standards

Student Readings:

Below are some links to articles and reports at various reading levels that would be appropriate to use with students in learning more about the genocide in Darfur.

Advanced: http://www.savedarfur.org/newsroom/policypapers/september_briefing_paper_the_genocide_in_darfur/

Intermediate: (1/15/07) - <http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/upfront/features/index.asp?article=f0115a>

Beginner: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3496731.stm>

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe the situation that has been occurring in Darfur since 2003.
2. What is genocide? According to what you have read, do you think the crisis in Darfur is genocide?
3. Besides the crisis in Darfur, what other issues are facing Sudan today?
4. What has been the response of the United States to the crisis in Darfur? Do you agree or disagree with the U.S. position? Why or why not?
5. What has been the response of the international community to the crisis in Darfur? What do you think the international community should do?
6. Explain what the concept of sovereignty is. The government of Sudan, centered in Khartoum, has sovereignty over the country, including what is going on in Darfur. Do you think other countries should intervene in a country's sovereign affairs? If so, when should this happen? Who will decide?

Lesson Ideas/Curriculum

This portion of the guide contains suggestions for teaching ideas and learning activities for incorporating this issue into your curriculum - across the disciplines. In addition, there are links to recommended curriculum units that are available online.

Social Studies/History:

- Refer back to the Players Section of the Issue in Focus and select several of the key players described. Once students understand a bit about the background of the situation in Sudan, assign each of them (or groups of students) to take on the role of one of these key players. Have students role play in simulated peace talks to end the conflict with these key players at the table.
- In a unit on the Cold War, study Sudan as an example of a proxy war, and draw connections between these entanglements and the situation in Sudan today.
- Sudan is a large country with a very diverse physical geography – and could be an interesting case study for geography courses. Arable land is disappearing in Sudan, and there is an ongoing struggle between herders and farmers over remaining land, which also plays into the economics and politics of the genocide in Darfur.
- Sudan was a colonial territory of Britain and gained independence in 1956. The effects of colonial rule on modern Sudan could be studied in units on colonialism.
- When studying about historical genocides such as the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide, make the connection to contemporary genocide in Darfur. An excellent site for genocide resources is: <http://www.facinghistory.org/Campus/reslib.nsf/0/1C597309452CA3FB8525718100699BA7?Opendocument>.
- Analyzing U.S. foreign policy toward Sudan and its impacts presents a great opportunity for history and government students to examine foreign policy in action, and even design their own foreign policy proposals for what the U.S. should do. World History and International Relations students can also delve into the role of the United Nations in this conflict and debate what actions should be taken.

English/Language Arts:

- Advocacy efforts against the genocide in Darfur provide a perfect opportunity for students to practice their persuasive writing – by writing persuasive essays, letters to the editor, or op-ed pieces.
- Analyze the way the mainstream media portrays the conflict in Darfur. Is the coverage fair and balanced? Does the media present an accurate view of all the factors involved in the conflict, or does it tend to break down the situation as just an ethnic conflict between Arabs and non-Arab Africans? To see some more information about the latter question, go to: <http://www.africaaction.org/resources/page.php?op=read&documentid=2674&type=6&issues=1024>

- Responding to Literature – there are some significant fiction and non-fiction works (see recommended books below) detailing the personal stories of Sudanese during the north-south civil war. Students can write literary responses using these texts, as well as analyze the historical context of literature and point of view.

Science:

- In earth sciences, study the impacts of desertification in northern Africa, including Sudan. Make connections to the impact that the continuing loss of arable land has on the people in Sudan.
- Many experts believe that global warming is already having an impact in Africa. Research the impacts of global warming in Africa, and make predictions about future impacts in Sudan in particular, and how this will affect people living there.

Mathematics:

- Humanitarian agencies are spending a significant amount of money to try to assist and protect the people of Darfur. Research some of the countries and agencies aiding Darfur, and make a chart to illustrate their contributions. As a provocative comparison, also research the amount of money Sudan earns each year in oil revenue.
- The humanitarian situation continues to worsen because of the genocide in Darfur, but how does this compare to other humanitarian crises? Using the information in the student readings, have students make a chart of the number of people killed, wounded, and those who have had to flee their homes as refugees or IDPs, then have them find this information for another recent humanitarian conflict (or historical conflict or emergency).
- Use information from the readings to review mathematical concepts. For example, there are about 39 million people living in Sudan, and about 3 million people have been affected by the conflict (400,000 killed, 2.5 million displaced). What percent of the total population in Sudan has been affected by this conflict?

Recommended Curriculum Units

Understanding Sudan: A Teaching and Learning Resource

This site includes 5 teaching modules that strive to contextualize the conflict in Sudan by providing in depth background on various cultural, political, historical, and economic factors. This site also includes extensive resource lists that include primary documents, analysis, news reports, and more. <http://understandingsudan.org/index.php>

CHOICES Program: Violence in Darfur, Sudan

This lesson plan has students explore the violence in Sudan using multiple sources, and then evaluate the effectiveness of different online sources. Students also analyze the debate over whether the violence in Sudan constitutes genocide and assess the international community's response. CHOICES also offers a curriculum unit entitled "Confronting Genocide: Never Again?" which traces the evolution of the international community's response to genocide and examines how the US has responded to five cases of genocide. http://www.choices.edu/resources/twtn_darfur.php

Globalization101: Darfur: A Case Study

This lesson plan features a case study of the situation in Sudan. Discussion questions appear at various points within the article, challenging students to more fully understand the issues. The site also contains a list of

internet resources that can be used for further study. <http://www.globalization101.org/index.php?file=news1&id=82>

Facing History and Ourselves: It's About Time: Responding to the Crisis in Darfur

Often students learn about events as historical moments with distinct beginning, middles and ends. But, what happens when students have to confront a current event that has no end? In this lesson, students will not only gain a better understanding of how the genocide in Darfur has unfolded over time, but they will also consider how our actions are shaped by the information we have at specific moments in time. <http://www.facinghistory.org/campus/reslib.nsf/lessonsnew/CCB9ED83AF4E929385257265006DAB6E?opendocument>

Additional Resources

This list of resources is provided if you want to find some more specific information about the issues presented in this issue of the Global Affairs Monitor. These resources are additional books, films, and web sites that will provide more nuanced or specific information about aspects of this issue.

BOOKS

What Is the What by Dave Eggers

What Is the What is the story of Valentino Achak Deng, a refugee of the Sudanese civil war. Fleeing from his village in the mid-1980s, Deng becomes one of the so-called Lost Boys – children pursued by militias, government soldiers, lions and hyenas and myriad disease, in their search for sanctuary, first in Ethiopia and the Kenya. Eventually Deng is resettled in the United States with almost 4,000 other young Sudanese men, and a very different struggle begins. Available at Amazon.com

They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky: The true story of three lost boys from Sudan by Alphonsion Deng, Benson Deng, Benjamin Ajak, and Judy A. Bernstein

Raised by Sudan's Dinka tribe, the Deng brothers and their cousin Benjamin were all under the age of seven when they left their homes after terrifying attacks on their villages during the Sudanese civil war. In 2001, the three were relocated to the U.S. as part of an international refugee relief program. Arriving in this country, they immediately began

to fill composition books with the memoirs of chaos and culture shock collected here. Good for teenage readers. Available at Amazon.com

Voices of Sudan by David Johnson

Voices of Sudan is a full-color photographic portrait that paints a picture of one of the world's most challenged countries, Sudan. Steeped in a dark history of religious persecution and genocide, bathed in constant chaos and turmoil, and touched with ongoing conflict, these photos and stories poignantly reveal the struggle of the Sudanese people. All proceeds go toward food, wells, and medicine for the Sudanese. Available at Amazon.com and <http://www.silentimages.org/silentimages/>

Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan
Written by Mary Williams; illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

This picture book tells the fictional story of Garang, who is orphaned as a result of the Sudanese civil war, becoming one of the Lost Boys. This is a good book for young readers (ages 9-12). Available at Amazon.com

The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars (African Issues) by Douglas Hamilton Johnson

This book gives a readable yet nuanced and well-informed analysis of the history and politics of Sudan's civil wars. Factors such as humanitarian aid, oil revenue, and terrorist organizations, are cited and examined as underlying issues that have exacerbated the violence. Available at Amazon.com

FILMS

Sand and Sorrow

This HBO documentary, executive produced and narrated by George Clooney, gives an inside look at the crisis in Sudan, examining the plight of internally displaced people, responses of the international community, and the failed peace process. The accompanying website features interviews with the filmmakers and experts, a slideshow, and links to additional resources. Available at Amazon.com <http://www.hbo.com/docs/programs/sandandsorrow/index.html>

Darfur Diaries: Message from Home

This film provides an inside look into the tragedy in Darfur. A team of three independent filmmakers monitored the worsening political and humanitarian crisis in 2004 and recognized that the mainstream media offered marginal and inadequate coverage. They set out with the goal of providing a platform for the people of the Darfur to speak for themselves about their experiences, their fears, and their hopes for the future. There is also an accompanying book. Available at Amazon.com and Netflix.

The Devil Came on Horseback

This film exposes the tragedy taking place in Darfur as seen through the eyes of an American witness who has since returned to the U.S. to take action to stop it.

<http://www.thedevilcameonhorseback.com/>

Sudan: Translating Genocide*

This documentary, produced by MTV, follows three American college students as they travel to Sudan to investigate the crisis.

Watch online at http://www.mtvu.com/on_mtvu/activism/stand/search.jhtml

"Doesn't go into much background or context, but kids might like it since it's MTV."

Lost Boys of Sudan

Lost Boys of Sudan is an Emmy-nominated feature-length documentary that follows two Sudanese refugees on an extraordinary journey from Africa to America. Safe at last from physical danger and hunger, a world away from home, they find themselves confronted with the abundance and alienation of contemporary American suburbia. *This film gives context about the North/South conflict in Sudan, not the current conflict in Darfur.*

Available at <http://www.lostboysfilm.com/index.html>, Amazon.com, and Netflix.

MULTIMEDIA AND WEB RESOURCES

The Online NewsHour: Crisis in Sudan

This website includes up-to-date news coverage of the crisis, in addition to lesson plans, interactive features, videos, and more.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/africa/darfur/index.html

Frontline: On Our Watch: Chronology: Four Years of Failure

This is a concise, easy-to-understand timeline that includes major developments in the Sudan crisis, from 2003 through the summer of 2007. The site also features links to key documents and speeches.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/darfur/etc/cron.html>

**Frontline/World: Sudan - The Quick and the Terrible,
January 2005**

This website includes interviews, videos, maps, fact sheets, as well as an extensive list of links to further resource materials.

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/sudan/>

**ChannelOne: The Suffering of Sudan – Inside the world’s
worst humanitarian crisis**

This website includes interactive features, a downloadable version of ChannelOne’s coverage of the crisis, a guide for how to help, and a forum to voice opinions about the crisis. Good for describing the situation at the peak of the crisis, but no updates since 2005.

<http://www.channelone.com/news/2004/11/08/sudan/>

Washington Post Special Report: Sudan in Crisis

This special report from the Washington Post is from 2006, but has a good timeline, basic background information about the country, and great graphics to grab students’ attention. Would be a good overview of the height of the conflict.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/interactives/sudan/?hpid=specialreports>

Human Rights Watch

This website has good background articles on the crisis in Sudan, as well as up-to-date news articles relating to the various aspects of the situation.

High level. <http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=sudan>

Standards

Activities described in this Classroom Companion correspond to the following national standards from McREL (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning). <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

Social Studies - -

World History Standards:

Era 9: The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes

World History Topics:

- 56. End of European Colonial Rule in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean
- 63. European, American, and Japanese Imperial Expansion
- 85. Human and Civil Rights
- 121. Multinational and International Organizations

Historical Understanding:

- 1. Understand and know how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns
- 2. Understands the historical perspective

Geography - -

- 2. Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment

- 6. Understands that culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions
- 13. Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the divisions of Earth's surface
- 15. Understands how physical systems affect human systems
- 16. Understands the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources

English/Language Arts - -

Writing:

- 1. Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Reading:

- 6. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
- 7. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Media:

- 10. Understands the characteristics and components of the media

Science - -

Earth and Space Sciences:

- 1. Understands atmospheric processes and the water cycle

Mathematics - -

1. Uses a variety of strategies in the problem-solving process
3. Uses basic and advanced procedures while performing the processes of computation
6. Understands and applies basic and advanced concepts of statistics and data analysis
9. Understands the general nature and uses of mathematics