

The Breakdown of the Darfur Genocide

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Introduction

The Darfur Genocide was an absolute tragedy that resulted in direct systematic violence/destruction, mass displacement and the violation of human rights. The bloodshed that occurred in Darfur went unnoticed for an extended period before receiving attention, becoming known as the first act of genocide in the 21st century. This prompts questions on the possible reasons of delay in the intervention to this crisis by the U.S. government as well as the international community. The delay of the U.S. government raises concerns about the complexities of economic and diplomatic interests. This case study seeks to investigate and uncover the answer to these questions. Seeking to fully understand the background of the Darfur Genocide and the possible factors that contributed the prolonged duration of this conflict. Furthermore, this case study seeks to raise awareness for the disgusting acts that were intently committed, advocating for justice on behalf of all the victims that lost their lives. Through this exploration, there is hope that light will be shed on those who were affected by the Darfur Genocide and hope to inspire action to help those in need and steer in the direction where such actions are no longer tolerated.

Background

Darfur is a major province located in the western region of Sudan. To fully understand, Darfur held a population of about six million people. The region was split into two main groups which were individuals who identify as "African" of black heritage and work predominantly in sedentary agriculture, and those who identify as "Arab" of Arab descent and are primarily semi-nomadic cattle herders. Tension existed in Darfur for decades between the nomadic Arabs who were backed by the Sudanese government and African tribes. This dispute started over land. It

wasn't until the year 2003, when two rebel groups consisting of the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement stood up against the government and carried out attacks on their facilities. This behavior was created due to frustration of no economic assistance and prolonged discrimination against the Sudanese Blacks in Darfur. Omar al-Bashir, the president of Sudan responded to this by funding a local Islamic militia known as the "Janjaweed". In retaliation, the Government of Sudan with the help of Janjaweed engaged in attacks with the rebel groups employing tactics of rape, murder, and displacement as well as carrying out a scorched earth policy against all civilians who share the same ethnicity as the rebel groups. All food and water supplies were cut off causing villages to be unlivable. The people of the villages were forced to either move to refugee camps or accept a certain death. It wasn't until two thousand and four when the U.S. government labeled the violence that took place in Darfur as genocide.

The Presentation of Findings

The results of the Darfur Genocide were "more than 400,000 people have been killed and more than 2.5 million people have been displaced in the regions of Darfur and Chad." (Uscinski et al., 2009, para. 1). It was reported by a U.S. official that five hundred and seventy-four villages had been destroyed as well as another one hundred and fifty-seven damaged since mid-200 (Straus, 2005). The perpetrators in this act were the Sudan Government, the militia Janjaweed that was funded by the Sudan Government along with other Arab groups hired to eliminate the rebels. Who they referred to as the rebels were the non-Arab civilian population living in Darfur. Jennifer Leaning traveled to the eastern border of Chad where over two hundred thousand refugees from Darfur fled to. During her 10-day adventure she visited many refugee

camps where she conversated with the refugees as well as interviewed the international humanitarian-relief community. Everyone she talked to said they had traveled three to ten days from Darfur to the border of Chad with minimal food and water. The refugees also all explained the same pattern of attack that they experienced from the militia and the government. The militia forces would rush the villages at dawn and completely raid them killing all the men that resisted and raping the women (Leaning, 2004). Anyone who ran away would be chased down and killed before the attackers would go back to the village where they would loot and destroy everything. The non-Arab civilians had to go through all that pain and suffering due to their ethnicities and the color of their skin. While these people had to suffer the Sudanese government officials and militia leaders had to deal with a lack of accountability for their deeds, as only a small number of people were the focus of IICC prosecutions.

By December 2003, the Darfur crisis was asserted as “worst crisis in the world today” by Jan Egeland from Humanitarian affairs (2005). After these warnings, nothing was done by the international committee to at least try and stop the bloodshed. “Ironically, the international community's unwillingness to intervene results--at least in part--from concern that a fragile peace deal between north and south will be jeopardized” (Booker & Colgan. 2010). The United States government was less focused on the violence that occurred and more focused on figuring out if what occurred could be described as genocide. It was on June 16th, 2004, when “US State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher confirmed that the US government was attempting to ascertain whether the violence and ethnic cleansing that was taking place in Darfur met the definition of genocide under the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (UNCG)” (Totten & Markusen, 2006). There were many debates on this crisis and the evaluation of it. The problem was how slow the government was moving to act. There was

constant discussion of the size of this crisis and possible ways of lending a hand. During the Bush administration, the United States government resisted calling the violence in Darfur genocide, preferring to refer to it as "genocidal acts." Concerns over potential legal ramifications and the need to act in accordance with the Genocide Convention contributed to this hesitancy. Members of the House of Representatives and the US senate sent out warnings to Sudan that discontinue their violent actions or face legal consequences. In late June, it was reported by the State Department that the U.S. had surveillance photos showing widespread destruction of hundreds of villages and refugee camps in Darfur proving that the attacks were solely designated towards Black Sudanese villages—and no Arabic villages (Totten & Markussen, 2006). Six U.S. Senators would go on to declare the Darfur situation as a case of genocide on July 13th, 2004. The United States faced criticism for allegedly being reluctant to use more force, like military intervention, to put an end to the violence in Darfur. Political factors impacted the U.S. response to the Darfur Genocide, including the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, conflicting foreign policy objectives, and worries about overreach. The act of sending out money as well as troops to Darfur took a much longer process in the House of Congress. There was a division between parties. With the way the House of Congress was set up at the time and its party influences there was partisan polarization. Partisanship had a muted effect on the Darfur crisis. It was discovered that Democrats were more supportive of the Darfur legislation than Republicans. "In all cases, Democrats were much more likely than Republicans to support sending money, and in the case of the DGAA, troops to Darfur" (Uscinski et al, 2009).

Analysis and Discussion

The Darfur Genocide exemplifies state-sanctioned violence and the intricacies of international intervention. The Integrated Theory of Supranational Crimes offers a structure for comprehending the complex dynamics involved in this crisis. The genocide in Darfur showcases how political, economic, and social factors combine to sustain mass atrocities. The influence of diplomatic and economic interests on the direction of international response is one remarkable feature of the Darfur Genocide. The United States and other world powers resisted taking decisive action to stop widespread violence and violations of human rights, despite overwhelming evidence of these crimes. The unwillingness to classify the acts of violence as genocide highlights the precarious equilibrium between geopolitical concerns and moral obligations. The weighting of strategic alliances and economic ties over humanitarian issues is indicative of the intricate dynamics of international relations. The Darfur Genocide also highlights the boundaries of sovereignty and the necessity of strong accountability frameworks. Darfuri civilians continued to suffer while the international community struggled with political calculations and legal definitions. The inadequacies of current frameworks for addressing state crimes are highlighted by the failure to prevent or effectively intervene in the crisis. The Darfur Genocide also brings up more general issues regarding the duty to defend the rights of marginalized groups and preserve the universal principles of justice and human dignity. We cannot afford to stand by while mass atrocities continue as global citizens. The Darfur case serves as a constant reminder of the moral need to uphold justice and advance peace despite complex geopolitical circumstances.

From the studies done, it seems clear that issues may take time for the United States Government to act on. The ability to make a difference and push towards change shouldn't be only held in the Governments hands. Every single human being around the world can advocate for

justice. There are ways that the use of geographical information systems technology could be used as a more effective response to emerging threats such as genocide. “On 10 April 2007, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Google unveiled a joint initiative called Crisis in Darfur, a package of electronic maps and other data utilizing high-resolution satellite imagery in Google Earth to display graphic evidence of the on-going genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan” (Levinger, 2009). Anyone has the access with Google Earth to learn about and view the Crisis in Darfur. The evolution of technology has unlocked a whole new world of access and the ability to learn new things. With the use of technology and the Internet, the ability for those to raise awareness is easy. All it takes is a post online.

Summary

The Darfur Genocide provides a powerful case study that illustrates the complex relationships between international intervention, state-sponsored violence, and the pursuit of justice. Examining the conflict's historical context, we find that political and economic factors have exacerbated long-standing tensions between ethnic groups. The shocking human cost of the genocide—millions of people killed and hundreds of thousands of displaced—is revealed by the finding's presentation. The Sudanese government and affiliated militias were among the perpetrators who routinely targeted civilians based on their ethnicity. They used harsh methods to impose fear and maintain control. We can see the intricate interaction of social, political, and economic factors that led to the Darfur Genocide by using the lens of the Integrated Theory of Supranational Crimes. The difficulty of striking a balance between geopolitical interests and moral imperatives is highlighted by the unwillingness of the international community, especially the United States, to intervene forcefully. The situation in Darfur highlights the importance of robust accountability systems and the imperative of collective endeavors to prevent similar

atrocities in the future. The Darfur Genocide is not only a historical event but also a sobering reminder of the consequences of indifference and inaction in the face of mass atrocities. This statement underscores the moral imperative of combating injustice and promoting justice, peace, and the universal entitlement to human rights. This case is crucial for the examination of state crime due to its depiction of the intricacies of state-sponsored violence and the challenges associated with holding individuals accountable in a globalized society. Moreover, it is imperative for the public to be cognizant of this case in order to fully grasp the consequences of political decisions, the significance of global cooperation, and the essentiality of resisting injustice wherever it may be encountered. To honor the memories of the victims and work towards a fair and peaceful world for future generations, we must unite and act with resolute dedication.

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