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The failure of humanitarian intervention and the role of NGOs in Darfur

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This article examines the trends and types of arguments by scholars on the issue of humanitarian intervention and situates them within the genocide that occurred in Darfur, Sudan. The article argues that humanitarian intervention postulate by many scholars failed in Darfur and Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Amnesty International, International Committee of Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) and Coalition for International Justice led the way to expose what happened, challenged the government of Sudan, gave aid to the Darfur people, provide information to the world that led to the indictment of the Sudanese government and its president Omar Al-Bashir. The article concludes that the non-governmental organizations were more useful and valuable to the people of Darfur than the humanitarian intervention theorized by the United Nations and its member countries.

Key words: Sudan, Darfur, Genocide, Humanitarian Intervention, Responsibility to Protect, NGOs.

INTRODUCTION

According to Gary Bass, ‘...humanitarian interventions are not just a new-fangled experiment from the 1990s’ (Bass, 2008: 5). Humanitarian intervention has been an issue for hundreds of years. It did not start today, although it was revived in the 1990s when obvious cases of genocide were witnessed in Bosnia and Rwanda. It has also found more voices with the recent problems in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and most recently Darfur in Sudan. Humanitarian intervention is also a controversial issue that has pitted scholars, administrators, government officials and policy makers at the United Nations and other regional bodies against one another. These stakeholders or groups of people interested in humanitarian intervention have differences and similarities

in their opinions on the whole issue. The differences and similarities of their opinions are analysed by this article and contextualized with what happened in Darfur Sudan. The article analyses the arguments on the relationship between humanitarian intervention and state sovereignty, who should authorize and carry out humanitarian intervention, what events should lead to humanitarian intervention and relates it to the Darfur crises. The article also examines the activities of non-governmental organizations specifically, Amnesty International, International Committee of Red Cross Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) and Coalition for International Justice and their contributions to alleviating the suffering of the Darfur people and exposing the

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genocidal activities of the government of Sudan. This article is important because it re-emphasises the failures of Humanitarian Intervention and brings out the importance of the NGOs in helping to find a final resolution to the Darfur crisis.

METHODOLOGY

This article draws its sources from arguments made by scholars and United Nations officials and their consultants. This is supported with primary literature from the United Nations, its agencies, and non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, International Committee of Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) and Coalition for International Justice. The article analyses the effort of the United Nations as per Humanitarian Intervention in resolving the Darfur crises, its failures and how the NGOs exposed to the world what happened inside Darfur. The article is divided into two major sections. The first section covers the arguments on humanitarian intervention and how it failed in Darfur. The second section covers the contributions of the NGOs and how they helped in exposing the atrocities in Sudan where humanitarian intervention failed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Humanitarian intervention and state sovereignty

The main controversy on humanitarian intervention is how it affects or relates to state sovereignty. From ancient times to the present day, empires, kingdoms, countries, states, cities, and even small towns and villages have always guarded their sovereignty jealously. Their sovereignty is a mark of their independence and separate identity. Bass traces the history of humanitarian intervention from the 18th century to the present day and concluded that humanitarian intervention, and all the controversy and debates that come with it, are not new. Bass argues that despite the cynicism and pessimism, humanitarian intervention is important and necessary but that it can encroach into state sovereignty if not checked or contained. He also believes that empires and countries have used humanitarian intervention to pursue imperialist, economic, political, and other selfish interests, which interfered with the sovereignty of others (Bass, 2008: 8).

Jack Donnelly argues that humanitarian intervention is crucial and necessary when there is a gross violation of human rights anywhere in the world, and it should be used guardedly in line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, Chapter VII, which gives the Security Council the power to carry out intervention when world peace is threatened. He believes that despite its obvious threat to state sovereignty, it is useful because of the importance of avoiding situations like Rwanda and Bosnia. His main discourse focuses on the examples of Rwanda and Bosnia, where the world failed to act, and Kosovo, where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened without reference to the Security

Council (Donnelly, 2007: 187).

Adam Roberts agrees with the report of the 2001 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), and he is very much in agreement with most of its recommendations with regards to Responsibility to Protect, which stipulates that the world has the responsibility to protect the citizen of any nations when gross human rights abuse is determined (Roberts, 2003: 149). Robert agrees that the Charter of the United Nations in Article II prohibits member countries from meddling in the internal affairs of other countries by force of arms or other means. He too agreed that humanitarian intervention might be perceived by others as camouflage for more sinister motives because of the antecedents and current activities of powerful countries. He also mentions the attempt by the American government under George W. Bush to associate their National Security Strategy of invading Iraq and Afghanistan with humanitarian intervention as an example of misuse of humanitarian intervention and responsibility to protect (Roberts, 2003: 150).

Ramesh Thakur notes that the ICISS report later replaced the usage of Humanitarian Intervention with Responsibility to Protect and Intervention for Human Protection Purposes (Thakur, 2003: 160). Thakur argues that state sovereignty cannot be infringed upon by the idea of responsibility to protect because the sovereignty of a state is attached to the responsibility of protecting its citizens, and when a state fails to adequately protect its citizens it is the responsibility of the international community to intervene (Thakur, 2003: 161). Nsongurua Udombana, justifying the necessity of intervention in Darfur and other troubled areas of the world, argued that the UN Charter prohibits intervention or meddling in the affairs of other countries, however, Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter also empowers the Security Council to intervene when necessary (Udombana, 2005: 1155). He also notes that the Charter of African Union and the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union in their acts and protocols, respectively, agree with the UN Charter on non-intervention but also support intervention when necessary (Udombana, 2005: 1156).

Edward Newman analyses the reports of four commissions on humanitarian intervention, namely: The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS); the Advisory Committee on Issues of Public Law and International Affairs, Netherlands, 2000; the Report of the Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000; and the Danish Institute of International Affairs, 1999. According to Newman, the four reports agree on the importance of intervention when necessary even though such intervention can violate the territorial integrity of another country, and he cited Chapter VII of the UN Charter to support his arguments (Newman, 2002: 118-119). Terry Nardin based his arguments for the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention on morality. He argued that morality is enough justification

for humanitarian intervention when the need arises. He traced the issue of humanitarian intervention back to the 18th century when the real debate on humanitarian intervention started. He argued that common morality is enough reason for humanitarian intervention even if it violates the sovereignty of some states (Nardin, 2002: 64). Kelly Pease and David Forsythe tacitly support humanitarian intervention even in the face of obvious abuse by countries and fear by developing countries that it is another ploy to intervene in their internal affairs. They agree that intervention has been used both negatively and positively, and the United Nations is unable to agree on its true structure and nature (Pease and Forsythe, 1993: 313-314).

The only author that differs on the issue of humanitarian intervention is Mohammed Ayoob. Ayoob argues that humanitarian intervention is a ploy devised by some powerful developed countries to intervene at will into the internal affairs of other countries. He argues that the main aim of humanitarian intervention, which was fanned out by some Western governments, regional powers, and international and regional organizations, is to find a reason to meddle in the affairs of most developing countries (Ayoob, 2002: 95-96). He disagrees with the arguments for humanitarian intervention that find support in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. He insists that Article II of the UN Charter is very clear on the prohibiting of intervention in the affairs of member states by other members. The only reason he accepts for humanitarian intervention is if there is no government in the area or in case of state failures, such as in Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, or the Republic of Congo (Ayoob, 2002: 95-96). Ayoob's arguments are well founded because looking at most interventions, one can see a pattern that is not bent towards countries that required such help. Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Congo/Zaire are all examples of state failure in which law and order completely broke down for a long time which brought about genocide, mass killings, inhumanity, and gross abuses of human rights. And nothing was done for a very long time by the international community save for regional efforts by the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Ayoob's fears are reasonable in the sense that interventions in many parts of the world by powerful nations tend to be based on economic, political, and strategic interests and not necessarily humanitarian concerns.

Nevertheless, the arguments of Bass, Donnelly, Roberts, Ramesh, Udombana, Newman, Nardin, Pease and Forsythe are genuinely based on the recent human rights abuses and genocides committed in Darfur by the government of Sudan. Humanitarian intervention is very important and extremely crucial in the present world and should not be dismissed just because some countries may use interventions to achieve other aims. Article II of the UN Charter, which prohibits member states from interfering in the affairs of other member states, also

makes it clear that it will not affect the application of the contents of Chapter VII, which gives the Security Council the powers to intervene where world peace is threatened. Ayoob argues that humanitarian intervention will reintroduce the concept of civilized and uncivilized countries because most developing countries will not meet the standards due to the general instability of their economic and political life (Ayoob, 2002: 99). Although, humanitarian intervention is subject to abuse and misuse by powerful countries who can use intervention as an excuse to meddle in the affairs of other countries; however, it should not diminish the importance of intervention in curbing and preventing genocide and other forms of gross abuses of human rights. Humanitarian intervention is not perfect because it has loopholes and weaknesses, but it is needed by the world community to prevent leaders and tyrants who abused their people regularly or leaders who are planning to destabilise the life of others for political and economic reasons. Humanitarian intervention should be carried out on need basis and should be done multilaterally with the approval of the UN Security Council

Who should authorize humanitarian intervention?

There is a general agreement among scholars on who should authorize humanitarian intervention. Most scholars believe that intervention should only be authorized by the UN Security Council. Pease and Forsythe have argued that only the Security Council should be able to authorize humanitarian intervention because of a tendency for intervention to be grossly violated and misused. This should be the main point of the agreement if humanitarian intervention is to be accepted by all. That is, no other country or group of countries can authorize intervention except the Security Council because it is obvious that it has the tendency to be misused (Pease and Forsythe, 1993: 298-299). They also mention two types of intervention: intervention for nationals and non-nationals. Intervention for nationals is when it involves people of the country and non-national intervention is when the intervention has nothing to do with local populations. They believe that the latter is very suspicious because it is largely seen as an excuse to pursue economic, political, and strategic interests in the name of humanitarian intervention (Pease and Forsythe, 1993: 298-299).

Nardin believes that if the UN Security Council fails to authorize intervention, a group of states should intervene based on common morality (Nardin, 2002: 118-119). This premise supports NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 even though there was no authorization from the Security Council. Nardin's moral arguments are real and genuine because it is inhuman and immoral on the part of other countries in the world to stand by and look the other way when atrocities are being committed. Although it is wrong

and immoral to watch as thousands are inhumanly treated and killed in Sudan, allowing a group of states to intervene without authorization from the Security Council might threaten world peace instead of maintaining it. For example, how possible will it be for a group of states without the permission of the Security Council to intervene in Darfur? The consequences would be great because the African Union was divided on the matter, the Arab League was also divided on the issue, and China, India and Russia have strong economic and strategic interests in the country (Newman, 2002: 119). Humanitarian intervention in Sudan would be disastrous unless authorized by the UN Security Council with a unanimous vote.

After assessing the four reports on humanitarian intervention, Newman concluded that all four reports recommended the use of humanitarian intervention if it is approved by the UN Security Council. The four reports also agreed on multilateral effort if approval cannot be obtained from the UNSC, but this must be reserved for extreme cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other gross violations of human rights (Newman, 2002: 118-119). It is difficult, if not impossible, to apply this to every country that is found to be involved in genocide or ethnic cleansing. A Multilateral effort without the UNCS's approval was successfully used in Kosovo by NATO and would have been successful if it occurred in Rwanda. However, it was not possible to use a multilateral effort in Sudan where it has been established that the government is involved in genocide and the systemic ethnic cleansing of the black population. The most universally approved and acceptable way to get approval for intervention is to go through UNSC. This will curb misuse that can lead to a threat to international peace.

While Roberts agrees with the ICISS report (Roberts, 2003: 146). Thakur differs from the report and wants the UNSC to be the only body that can approve humanitarian intervention (Thakur, 2003: 142). Thakur's views seem to be the most acceptable not among scholars and other debaters of the humanitarian issue but among United Nations member nations, who are the main decision-makers on this matter. It is important to note that the commission wants the five permanent members of the Security Council to withhold their vetoes when any serious issue of humanitarian intervention is tabled for discussion. The commission also wants the members to pledge not to consider their economic and other interests when deliberating on such matters relating to intervention. This is a good thing because it is the only way the body can truly decide on approval. However, is it possible to have the permanent members of the UNSC withhold their vetoes and refuse to consider their national interests on any issue in the world? It is yet to be seen. Maybe that is why Roberts calls intervention one step forward in search of the impossible Roberts, 2003: 142.

Udombana was very strong in recommending humanitarian intervention to resolve the issue of Darfur.

He wants approval to be obtained from the UNSC but argues that if the body is unable to give approval or act, actions can be taken by regional security arrangements like the African Union (Udombana, 2005: 1155). He believes that all these can be done without the approval of the UNSC. All the three suggestions made by Udombana to resolve the problems of Darfur outside the Security Council will lead to anarchy in Sudan. Practically speaking, attacking Sudan by a group of countries would have led to war in Africa. The African Union will not approve force against Sudan because the Union is divided on the matter and going through the General Assembly will not work because the same countries in the Security Council are also in the General Assembly. It is also important to know that Sudan has crude oil, which is in the Darfur Region, being drilled by Chinese and Indian companies. Russia is also the main arms supplier to Sudan, which means the country, has two permanent members of the Security Council on its side. Putting sentiments aside, most of Udombana's recommendations cannot work in Sudan because it would have led to complete anarchy in the region.

Donnelly classifies authority to intervene into multilateral and bilateral and argues that only multilateral authorizations should be accepted because it has more moral authority than bilateral authorizations. He also subdivides multilateral intervention into international, where you have the United Nations, and regional, where you have groupings like NATO and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Donnelly, 2007:182). Donnelly's argues that intervention should be made based on the circumstances at hand (Donnelly, 2007: 181-182). He is right to make such conclusions because of NATO's success in Kosovo and the successes of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was the military arm of ECOWAS that helped to end the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In most cases, it is better to allow the regional grouping to resolve the matter, but it is very important to get the approval of the UNSC or the UN General Assembly.

Although Bass also believes in the importance of getting the UNSC to approve all humanitarian intervention, he also believes that it will be difficult to get the approval of all permanent members. Because of this difficulty of getting the approval of permanent members, he argues for the importance of multilateralism, claiming that multilateralism will give intervention legitimacy and remove possible suspicion among contending countries (Bass, 2008: 363). The importance of multilateralism in humanitarian intervention cannot be overemphasized because a unilateral intervention is always suspicious, no matter how humane or objective the intentions are. When a group of countries come together to intervene just like NATO in Kosovo or ECOWAS in Liberia and Sierra Leone, it legitimizes the intervention and makes the intentions positive. In most cases, a solo action by a country, no matter how successful and positive, will

generate resentments and condemnations from some quarters (Bass, 2008: 363). Even multilateral interventions are not immune from condemnations; for example, Russia, China, and India condemned NATO for their intervention in Kosovo, while some African countries were uncomfortable with Nigeria leading ECOWAS into Liberia and Sierra Leone (Bass, 2008: 365).

Ayoob differs from everyone with regards to who should decide if and when humanitarian intervention is necessary (Ayoob, 2010: 96). He strongly argues that intervention should be authorized when there are situations of complex political emergencies, such as state failures in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Congo. He argues that other problems that occur that lead to human rights abuses are part of state creations and consolidations that takes place in developing countries (Ayoob, 2010: 96-97). He also believes that a different world body that is unencumbered by national interests, and not the UNSC, should authorize intervention in the case of state failure (Ayoob, 2010: 99). These state consolidations, according to Ayoob, occurred in the United States during the Civil War as well as during many years of instability and wars witnessed by European countries before now (Ayoob, 2010: 99). The arguments of Ayoob are faulty, because it is difficult and near impossible to establish another world body to authorize humanitarian intervention. The present international balance of power would not allow for such a body. The UNSC might not be perfect but it is still the best option as far as the authorization of humanitarian interventions is concerned. If intervention should only be carried out in failed states, how do we address issues like Rwanda and Darfur, where interventions were needed? State creation and consolidation is not a strong argument; state creation and consolidation should not lead to genocide and ethnic cleansing. When such things are happening, the world must intervene, and the only body legally empowered to do so is the UNSC.

What reasons or conditions warrant humanitarian intervention?

Both Roberts and Ramesh agree with the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). The report recommends that:

'...it is that only if government fail in this duty and only if a wide variety of preventive and non-forceful measures also fail, may coercive actions be needed. These may include political, economic, or judicial measures, and in extreme cases they may also include military action' (ICISS, 2009). In other words, force will be the last resort after many options have been considered to resolve the matter. As observed earlier in this article, this is the view United Nations member states will likely agree with if they will ever make concessions on the structure of how the

intervention should be organized. Some countries will simply not agree to a structured arrangement of intervention even if such provisions are made in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Restrained and careful study is necessary before intervention is authorized. The importance of restraint and the careful study of situations must be emphasized because intervention can lead to an escalation of the matter if not properly organized and executed. For example, the UN intervention in Somalia in 1993 led to the escalation of the whole issue. The mission was ill-prepared and relied on a weak and unreliable intelligence report about the location of Mohammed Farah Aideed (Donnelly, 2007: 201).

Udombana agrees with the United Nation's Charter on empowering the Security Council to intervene if there is a threat to peace anywhere in the world, and he believes that the situation in Darfur was a threat to world peace, which therefore makes it qualify for humanitarian intervention (Udombana, 2005, 1188). Udombana is right; Darfur qualifies for humanitarian intervention because there was evidence of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and gross acts of inhumanity against the black population by the Arab-dominated Sudanese government. The only problem is how to organize intervention in Darfur. In summarizing the four reports, Newman concludes that they all agree that for intervention to be authorized there must be strong evidence of 'Genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international law' (Newman, 2002: 118). This list represents what most scholars believe are plausible reasons or pieces of evidence that warrant humanitarian intervention anywhere in the world. According to Nardin:

'If humanitarian intervention means acting to protect human rights, there are many such rights besides the right to life that might be threatened, including rights against torture, arbitrary detention, and racial discrimination. But usually only the gravest violations, like genocide and ethnic cleansing, are held to justify armed intervention. Such acts affect the lives of many people and the fate of entire communities. In the classic phrase, they shock the conscience of mankind' (Nardin, 2002: 68).

Pearse and Forsythe sum up what they consider to be good reasons for intervention:

'Imminent threats to life, whether from socioeconomic deprivation or from direct violation of civil rights (summary or arbitrary execution), could be considered most important-perhaps meriting at least multilateral intervention as authorized by the Security Council' (Pearse and Forsythe, 1993: 309).

Both Donnelly (2007: 203) and Bass (2008: 159) also believe that there should be intervention only when genocide, ethnic cleansing and other gross inhuman violations are established. Ayoob simply believes that

humanitarian intervention should only be authorized and executed if there is clear evidence of state failure signified by a complete breakdown of law and order, and there is no authority or government that is incapable of exercising control over the domain (Ayoob, 2010: 102). Ayoob (2010: 102-103) argues that intervention is not necessary if there is an authority still exercising a form of power. Ayoob's arguments are faulty because countries like Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Congo had governments throughout the mayhem, and the authority was challenged by others, which led to anarchy. Sudan was also another good example; was it right for world to fold its arms and ignore what was happening in Darfur Sudan because it is part of state consolidation? The answer is no. Although Sudan had a government during the Darfur crises but the whole country was not engulfed in a war. The systemic and gross human rights violations, genocide and ethnic cleansing that happened in Darfur deserved a serious humanitarian intervention by the full military might of the world community. In the case of Darfur, both humanitarian intervention and responsibility to protect failed. The world in terms of multilateral, bilateral and even unilateral failed to act when it was necessary. The job was left for the NGOs.

The failure of humanitarian intervention in Darfur

According to Scott Straus, 'so far, the convention has proven weak. Having been invoked, it did not- -contrary to expectations--electrify international efforts to intervene in Sudan' (Straus, 2005: 123). Alex J. Bellamy (2005: 32) supports Straus when he argues that 'Despite professed commitments to prevent future man-made humanitarian catastrophes, the world's response to the Darfur crisis has been muted'. It is important to note that many countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany etc. have made effort to resolve the Darfur crises but were not successful. Several regional and international organizations have also made attempts to resolve the Darfur crises on the premise of Humanitarian Intervention but have all failed. J.J Welling argues that 'Though regional organizations like the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are involved in Sudan, they have not resolved the Darfur conflict in a speedy fashion' (Welling, 2007: 159). Several attempts were also made through the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions, and even intervene in Darfur but all were not successful because of the differences among the member countries and their interests in Sudan as a country. Welling further argues that:

The responses of the United Nations' branches and committees were timelier and occurred on more fronts than in past conflicts; however, procedural obstacles within this international organization still loomed largely.

The threat of a veto from China or Russia deterred the U.N. Security Council from acting with greater swiftness or applying sanctions. China and Russia repeatedly threatened to use their individual vetoes to block all U.N. Security Council efforts to place sanctions on the Sudanese government, in order to protect their private economic interests (Welling, 2007: 160).

Both Russia and China blocked several attempts made to sanction Sudan because of their economic and military interest in the country. Owing to politics of national interest, the Darfur conflict got bogged down and became enmeshed in international politics which prevented any action against the Sudanese government that could stop the atrocities in Darfur. For a very long time, many people did not even agree there was a genocide going on in Darfur. For example, the Security Council in 2005 voted against calling the Darfur atrocities genocide (UN Security Council Report on Darfur, 2005). Straus states that 'much of the public debate in the United States and elsewhere, however, has focused not on how to stop the crisis, but on whether or not it should be called "genocide" under the terms of the Genocide Convention. Such a designation, it was long thought, would inevitably trigger an international response' (Straus, 2005: 123). Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams argue that there are four positions on Humanitarian Intervention: Communitarianism, Legal-Positivist: Restrictionists, Legal-Positivist: Counter-Restrictionists, and Liberal Cosmopolitanism (Bellamy and Williams, 2006: 146-148). All four schools of thought failed with regards to Darfur. The necessary work done, assistance provided, and information disseminated, all of which were important in determining and concluding that genocide took place in Darfur is attributed to NGOs working in and outside Darfur.

Non-Governmental Organizations and the Darfur problem

The NGOs have contributed immensely to the humanitarian effort and assistance in Darfur in many ways. The contributions of the NGOs in Darfur in terms of humanitarian assistance and information dissemination were very crucial, and the world would have been left in the dark for a long time if not for these NGOs. It is a fact that most of the humanitarian assistance that was provided to the suffering people of Darfur was the handwork of NGOs operating in the area. It is also a fact that almost all the information on the Darfur conflict, the genocide and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the Government of Sudan led by President Omar Al- Bashir was provided by the NGOs. In the case of Darfur, both humanitarian intervention and responsibility to protect failed to act when it was necessary. The NGOs saved the day.

According to Shamima Ahmad and David Porter, there are about 45,674 international NGOs of all types

operating in the world. (Ahmed and Potter 2006: 19). There were so many NGOs in the Darfur region of Sudan and the exact numbers cannot be confirmed. All the major NGOs in the world were very active in Darfur but this article focused on four major NGOs: Amnesty International, International Committee of the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) and Coalition for International Justice. These NGOs are referred to as major based on their activities and contributions in Sudan and not based on their international spread or size.

Background: Lansana Gberie (2004: 1) provides a detailed chronicle of what led to the Darfur crises. Most crises in Africa were largely based on tribal, ethnic, and sometimes clannish differences. For example, the Nigerian Civil war, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Congo crises were all based on tribalism, ethnicity, and clannishness. The crisis in Darfur transcends all these three; it was based on race, racial discrimination, and prejudice. Sudan is the largest country in Africa in terms of the area it occupies. It is a country of about forty-four million in population, with people of African descent having about fifty-two percent of the population while the Arab population represents about thirty-nine percent of the population and the rest of the nine percent is made up of minorities and foreigners. Seventy percent of the people are Muslim, twenty five percent are African Traditional Religionists, and the remaining five percent are Christians. The official languages are Arabic and English, but the people speak numerous African languages and dialects (CIA Fact Book, Sudan).

Since independence in 1956, all Sudanese governments including that of President Omar Al- Bashir, a General who came to power by military coup and presided over the Darfur crises, have pursued Islamism ideology without consideration for the non-Muslims. The people of Southern Sudan who are mostly blacks resisted this by forming the Sudan Peoples Liberation Organisation/ Army (SPLO/A), a political cum military organization founded and led by late Colonel John Garang, which engaged the Sudanese government in a civil war that lasted for more than twenty years (Flint and De Waal, 2005: xiii-xvi). In 2003, the Darfur crisis started, while President El-Bashir and late Colonel Garang were fine-tuning the Government of National Unity and Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended the civil war and agreed on a referendum that later gave the people of Southern Sudan their own country. While one problem was being solved another one started (Flint and De Waal, 2005: xvi).

The people of Darfur or Darfurians are also blacks just like the Southern Sudanese; however, the people of Darfur are Muslims while the Southern Sudanese are mainly Christians and Traditional worshipers (Flint and De Waal, 2005: xvi). They have a difference, which is

their religion, and they have something in common which is their skin colour; we must avoid confusing the two groups. Together, they have a substantial percentage of the crude oil deposits in Sudan. Darfur Region is in the western part of Sudan and the region is occupied by three states out of the twenty-five states in the country. They are Northern Darfur, Southern Darfur, and Western Darfur. Darfur is the largest region in Sudan and is mainly occupied by Muslims of black African origin. It has about six million people with the majority being the Fur people from where the region got its name from. 'Dar' means land and that is how we got Darfur meaning land of the Furs. They also have the Masalit tribe, the Zaghawa tribe, and other smaller tribes (Udombana, 2005: 1153). They are predominantly sedentary farmers who also depend on their livestock. There are also people of Arab origin that have settled down in Darfur through migration from other parts of the Maghreb. The Arabs are mainly nomadic Bedouins who depend entirely on livestock. The Arabs and the Africans have been clashing for years because of land, politics, and resource control (Udombana, 2005: 1153-1154).

The central government of Sudan, headquartered in Khartoum has been supporting the Arab settlers in Darfur against the indigenous African population. Successive governments from independence have armed, funded, and given support to the Arabs who have been attacking, killing, looting, displacing and even enslaving the African population of the Darfur region (Udombana, 2005:1154). This has continued unabated until the African tribes decided to form two different organizations to fight back and demand their human rights which have been trampled upon by the minority Arabs from the time of independence (Udombana, 2005:1155). The black Africans formed the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). What escalated the crisis was the attack by the SLA on 25 April, 2003 on the main military garrison, the main airport and air force base in the town of Al-Fasher which is the headquarters of the State of Northern Darfur. The SLA destroyed the Sudanese Army military vehicles, helicopters, air force jets and equipment. More joint attacks were carried out by the SLA and the JEM and more than six hundred Sudanese troops were killed and a General and a Colonel were captured as prisoners Totten and Markusen, 2006, 10). The Sudanese army was overwhelmed by the attacks and decided to form and use an Arab militia known as the Janjaweed.

The Janjaweed with the help of the Sudanese armed forces systematically attacked innocent black African civilians in towns, villages and hamlets in every nook and corner of Darfur. Men women, children, and infants were all killed, and the rest drove out of their habitats to die in the windedness of the desert (Flint and De Waal 2005: 102). Lansana Gberie argues that 'Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed and more than a million displaced in a well-coordinated campaign that some

humanitarian organizations, as well as political leaders, have called “genocide” (Gberie, 2004: 1). Their towns, villages and habitats were burnt and destroyed so that they would not come back. Their properties including livestock were stolen, the women were raped, and all sorts of inhuman treatment were meted out to them simply because their skin colour was black. The victims were not members of the SLA or JEM; these were innocent civilians leaving quiet lives in their towns, villages, and hamlets (Flint and De Waal 2005: 103). The Sudanese government tried to prevent the information from going out and even denied any such attacks and later denied the Janjaweed as highway robbers and social misfits causing trouble. The Sudanese Parliament will not even discuss Darfur because the ruling Arabs did not want to acknowledge it (Flint and De Waal 2005: 114). The media was gagged and prevented from publishing it. International Media like Al-Jazeera, which is known to have Arab sympathies were shut down and expelled because they broadcast the nefarious activities of the Sudanese government in collaboration with the Arab Militia called the Janjaweed (Flint and De Waal 2005: 114-115). The people of Darfur cried out for help and help came in various ways in terms of food, medicine etc. but no one could stop the Janjaweed because they have the backing of the Sudanese government and no one could stop the Sudanese government because of world politics.

Humanitarian assistance and information dissemination

NGOs worldwide are known to assist in any part of the world when the need arises. Although the roles of NGOs have increased with time, the traditional role of providing relief, charity, economic development, and humanitarian assistance is still among the most important functions or roles they play today (Ahmed and Potter, 2006: 3).

The assistance and relief effort and work done by the NGOs in Darfur were quite remarkable. It is a known fact that most NGOs receive funding from governments, money is important, but it is not everything. It is difficult, almost impossible for any government to directly provide the kind of assistance and relief given by the NGOs to the Darfurians because governments can easily be accused of interfering in the internal affairs of another country. In terms of funding, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was the highest contributor so to the Darfur relief effort and assistance. The government of United States had contributed more than one billion dollars through USAID to various NGOs just for Darfur (Ahmed and Potter, 2006: 4). However, the most difficult job is getting the food and materials to the refugees that desperately needed them, which is the work of the NGOs. The work of the NGOs in Darfur was important and difficult because they were not wanted by the Sudanese government. The Arab dominated

government did not want the people of Darfur to be helped; they wanted them to be left alone and let starvation complete what they have started. Going into Darfur or even into the refugee camps in Chad was a big risk any worker of an NGO had to take. It is more difficult to achieve a difficult task when some people did not want your assistance. That was the case with NGOs in Darfur. Working in a refugee camp is not the most comfortable job to undertake. For most of their staff, it was a strange land with different cultures and customs and most importantly they were seen as a threat or collaborators with the United States and the Western European countries. The Amnesty International was expelled from Sudan by the government of Omar Al-Bashir because it was perceived as an agent of the West (Perito, 2007: 151). Without the NGOs, the refugees will not get the food, medicine, education, and basic materials they needed for survival in the camps that were outside their country and far away from their destroyed homes.

Information dissemination by the NGOs was very crucial to know what was happening inside Sudan, inside Darfur and the refugee camps in Chad. Robert Perito emphasised the importance of information dissemination by human rights NGOs and argues that:

‘Organizations active in human rights are distinct from other NGOs in their style and their activities. Generally, their goal is to seek out, research and address specific and general situations where repression occurs. Once abuses are found and documented, human rights NGOs tend first to encourage the voluntary correction of the abuse, then to pressure the government to change and ultimately to publish and stigmatize the violator’ (Perito, 2007: 152).

Ahmad and Potter supported this argument when they listed public education as one of the functions of NGOs and concluded that ‘...public opinion is commonly cited as the object of NGOs advocacy (Ahmed and Potter, 2006: 15). John Howard acknowledged that ‘The State Department’s knowledge about the unfolding crisis in Darfur was limited to information from Non-governmental organization (NGO) workers...’ (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 60). The information provided by the NGOs in Darfur was invaluable. Television stations were not there, reporters were not there, nobody could even go into Sudan except the NGOs and they served as the main if not only source of information on the atrocities that were going on inside Darfur. It would have been difficult for the world to be properly informed if the NGOs did not provide this information because they were the only people that had access. The government of Sudan wanted to keep everything secret and did not like the activities of the NGOs. On 14 July 2008, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted and charged President Al-Bashir of Sudan for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. On 3 April 2009 ICC issued a warrant of arrest for Omar Al Bashir, President of Sudan for the charges earlier laid

against him (ICC, 2009).

The indictment and arrest warrant on President Al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court in 2008 and 2009 respectively made the government of Sudan expelled a total of sixteen NGOs from Darfur (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 62). Out of these sixteen NGOs expelled, Oxfam, CARE and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) were responsible for half of the humanitarian effort in Darfur. The criminal expulsion affected about two million refugees who depended entirely on the relief effort of these NGOs. This action was taken just to prevent the NGOs from sending reports out to the world to see. The government of Sudan realised that if these NGOs operate freely in Darfur, their atrocities will continue to be exposed. These NGOs did not give up; they did not just pack their bags and leave. Instead they moved to Republic of Chad to concentrate on the refugees who were forcefully driven from their homes in Darfur by the Janjaweed. The Sudanese government even encouraged its soldiers and the Janjaweed to attack aid workers to scare them away and discourage them from going back to the region (Amnesty International Report, 2009). However all these did not deter them from doing their job and providing information to the world.

Amnesty International (AI)

It is important to note that Amnesty International does not operate in Sudan; the organization was expelled many years ago by Al-Bashir's government even before the issue of Darfur came up. Amnesty was very active in reporting the racist actions and destabilization activities of the Arab Sudanese in South Sudan before Darfur came up. As far as information is concerned Amnesty International has played a leading role in providing detailed information and graphic details of the atrocities going on in Darfur. In its 2009 annual report on Sudan, Amnesty provided the details of the atrocities the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed have perpetrated. Amnesty reported that in May 2009 '...armed clashes in Abyei, on the border between northern and southern Sudan, led to the displacement of more than 50,000 people and the total destruction of the town'. 'Attacks on villages noticeably increased in 2008, with between 270,000 and 300,000 people displaced during the year. Widespread human rights violations continued despite the deployment of the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)' (Amnesty International Report, 2009). The Arab led government in Sudan wanted to remove every African in the Darfur area and relocate them to Chad to live with their fellow blacks (Flint and De Waal, 2005, 39). This kind of information can only be available to the world through the activities of NGOs. It was the Amnesty that first reported that attacks against humanitarian aid convoys peaked in 2008,

leading to a reduction by half in the World Food Programmers aid delivery to Darfur (Flint and De Waal, 2005, 39-40). The Amnesty International has kept the flow of information coming from Darfur. It was Amnesty International that concluded in its 2009 report that all the atrocities against the Africans continued even while they were in the refugee camps and refugees were not safe and even the aid workers were not safe because they have come continuously under the attack of the Janjaweed and the regular government troops of Sudan (Amnesty International Report, 2009). The Janjaweed and the regular Sudanese army have made several attacks on the refugees inside Chad. This shows how unsafe they were even inside the Chadian refugee camps.

The Sudanese government always refused to give visas to Amnesty staff to carry out investigations and make reports. Most of the reports about Sudan were done from Chad which accommodated a substantial number of the refugees from Darfur (Amnesty International Report, 2009). Amnesty is normally human rights NGO and does not go around distributing food, medicine, and materials to refugees. However, the information the organization provided helped governments, international organizations, individuals, and other NGOs that have an interest in Darfur. Many believe that the atrocities in Darfur have stopped. It was only with the information from Amnesty that the world was continuously informed about what was happening inside Darfur. This was important to continue to remind us and prick our conscience to do something to stop the unnecessary inhumanity to human beings because they differ in skin colour and physical appearance. It was also, through the Amnesty International 2007 Annual report that we know that the refugees in Darfur and the ones in Chad cannot go back to their villages because of fear of attacks and lack of security (Amnesty International Report, 2007). The continuous reports and searchlights on Darfur by Amnesty International have sustained the world interest in what was happening in the region. Many also believe that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed has stopped the violence in Southern Sudan. The 2010 report exposed the fact that fights continued in South Sudan between the government troops and the SPLA on one hand and tribal groups on the other hand. Amnesty painted a picture of chaos covered by the deceit of the Sudanese government (Amnesty International Report, 2010). The contribution of Amnesty international to information dissemination in Darfur is invaluable. No other organization was able to provide such information continuously.

Médecins Sans Frontières - doctors without borders (MSF)

The Humanitarian work done by Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), a medical NGO,

and the medical information they provided was unequal among the NGOs in Darfur. It was through MSF that all information about the medical conditions of the people of Darfur whether in a Refugee camp or in their villages was known. MSF provided detailed information about the health hazards faced by the internally displaced people and the refugees inside Chad. MSF treated the injured, treated the raped and treated the sick. MSF treated the victim of rape and carried out legal abortions where the foetus posed a danger to the woman. MSF operated clinics in almost every major town in the Darfur region and every refugee camp in Darfur and Chad (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). Through the medical files of MSF, the atrocities conducted by the Sudanese army and the Janjaweed can be seen. MSF listed the number of people treated, the number that died, the number of rape victims and how they were treated, the number of clinics that were been run and how many patients were treated in everyone. They honestly did not claim to take care of everybody that needed medical care (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). They admitted that there were areas where they could not help the people who needed their assistance because they simply could not provide it or because they lack the resources or because their lives were in danger or simply because they were overwhelmed (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010).

In 2009, MSF together with fifteen other international NGOs operating in Darfur was expelled by the Sudanese government because it claimed that they were agents of Western countries and they were collaborating with International Criminal Court against President Al- Bashir and his government (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). This did not deter MSF; instead they moved shop to Chad and fully resume providing medical assistance to the refugees in the camps. The resilience of the organization and the personal sacrifice of its doctors, nurses and other workers despite the harassment, killings, detentions, and threats to life by the Janjaweed are commendable. The level of inconvenience and uncomfortable situations among the internally displaced individuals inside Darfur and Sudan in general and the refugees in Chad was reduced drastically by the humanitarian effort of MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). The workers simply laid down their lives to save thousands of people with whom they have no relations and whom they do not know personally. It takes a hero to understand the pains of another person and do all that is possible to remove that pain. Although other medical NGOs were operating in Darfur, the work of MSF was unmatched in the medical field.

The humanitarian effort of MSF saved thousands of people that would have died from simple malaria to more serious wounds sustained from the Janjaweed supported by the regular Sudanese troops. It is important to note that MSF did not only restrict itself to providing medical assistance and relief; it also distributed food and clothing to the adults and school uniform for the children

(Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). MSF staff helped in teaching the children in the refugee camps and educating them about their situation and the importance of knowledge to help improve their lives. MSF also provided food supplements to fight malnutrition in many cases where the food rations were inadequate. It is important to note that the work by MSF was done under serious constraint, personal danger, and stress to the staff members because they were working in a hostile environment. The Darfur people needed their help, but the government of Sudan saw them as intruders to their plan which is to exterminate and empty the Darfur region of black people (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 12).

The presence of MSF and other NGOs restrained the criminal activities of the Janjaweed and the regular Sudanese troops because they knew that the NGOs record everything they see and encounter and were systematically transmitted to be broadcasted all over the world. The government of Sudan did not want the MSF and other NGOs to help the black African population that has been purposely dispersed into various refugee camps. The government did not want the refugees to be helped, fed, clothed, treated, and dignified. They see them as a threat to their plan and agenda which is to change the demography of Darfur and replaced its inhabitants with Arabs or people of Arab descents (Flint and De Waal, 2005: 39). The MSF did everything possible to prevent that by doing just the opposite of what the government wanted.

In recognition of their humanitarian effort and services effort all over the world, the MSF won the 1999 Nobel Prize for peace (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). This recognition of their prior work before Darfur confirms the dedication and effort, they have put into the work of assisting the less privileged. In 2010 the MSF for the first time launched the campaign against vaginal mutilation called infibulations and de- infibulations (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). The practise was widespread among Sudanese including the people of Darfur. The campaign against the barbaric practice helped to increase the mortality rate among women and young girls (Médecins Sans Frontières Report, 2010). The activities of MSF in terms of the relief effort and humanitarian assistance especially related to medicine were incomparable in Darfur. The information they provided in terms of the medical conditions of the internally displaced people and the refugees in Chad was the only consistent source from Darfur and Sudan in general. The information also provided about rape victims and the sort of treatment they were given confirms to the whole world that the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed used rape as a tool of warfare against Darfur women (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 13).

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The International Committee of Red is one of the oldest

and most reputable NGOs in the world. With more than one hundred and fifty years of experience and reputation, the ICRC is represented almost anywhere and everywhere in the world where human beings need assistance because of human or natural disasters (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010). Represented as Red Crescent in Muslim countries worldwide, the ICRC has come a long way and needs no introduction to anybody. Its work and contribution in Darfur Region were immense. The ICRC has been in Sudan helping the victims of civil war between the Sudanese government in the North and the SPLA fighters in the South (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2008). When the issue and crisis of Darfur erupted the ICRC was already on the ground even before other NGOs arrived. The ICRC has aided the internally displaced people and the Darfur refugees in Chad. Extensive medical treatment, medication prenatal and antenatal and even minor operations have been performed and sponsored by the organization. ICRC provided vaccination against diseases both to the Darfur people and the livestock (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010). Since livestock are an integral part of the life of the people and a lot of them depend on them, the ICRC recognized the importance of saving the animals to sustain the people.

Besides medical treatment and assistance to both humans and animals, the ICRC provided seeds and farming implements to the people so that they can resettle down and produce crops after they were forcefully uprooted from their lands by the Janjaweed in collaboration with the Sudanese government (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010). The ICRC has also been involved in feeding the internally displaced people and refugees alike. Meals and food supplements were provided to thousands of people affected by the crisis. They provide and support orthopaedic treatments, artificial limbs, and arms to people who lost them because of the violence. Even the ICRC claimed in its 2008 report in Sudan that its operation in Sudan is the largest in the world for five consecutive years (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010). The organization also campaigned and educated all the people involved in the crisis on the importance of respect and observance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). It even signed a memorandum of understanding with the Sudanese government to integrate IHL into the training manual of the armed forces. They also achieved that success with SPLA, SLA, and JEM. The ICRC was also involved in locating and reuniting family members separated by the conflict. The organization provided clean drinking water to the Darfur region by making boreholes in the internally displaced person centres and the refugee camps across the border in Chad. When the Sudanese government expelled sixteen international NGOs from Sudan, the ICRC succeeded in establishing a better relationship and

partnership with the Sudanese Red Crescent, which is supported by the government (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010).

The work of ICRC in Darfur was not restricted to providing medical assistance; it covers almost every aspect of life where the refugees and the internally displaced people had a need. The humanitarian effort and assistance provided by the organization were unequalled by any other organization. Besides humanitarian assistance the organization also served as a source of information about what was happening in Darfur to the world (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010). Owing to its influence, the ICRC had almost unrestricted access in the Darfur region; this access helped immensely in getting the necessary information out to the world. After the sixteen international NGOs were expelled from the Darfur region by the governments of Sudan, the rest of the world depended largely on the ICRC for what was happening inside Darfur. The activities of the organization in terms of information dissemination at that time were crucial (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010). The ICRC serves as an unbiased voice in terms of information dissemination anywhere they operate in the world and Darfur was not an exception. The reputation and goodwill of the ICRC are strong and the information they provided anywhere in the world is respected and accepted without doubt. The ICRC and other NGOs served as main sources of information about the atrocities that were committed inside Darfur by the Janjaweed with the support of the Sudanese government. Without these NGOs, the flow of information from Darfur and even the refugee camps in Chad would have been hampered. Due to the circumstances on the ground and the distrust of other NGOs by the Sudanese government of Al-Bashir, the ICRC was suitably entrusted with the responsibility of providing information about medical related issues, especially after Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) was expelled (International Committee of Red Cross Report, 2010).

Coalition for International Justice (CIJ)

The contribution of the Coalition for International Justice to the humanitarian effort in Darfur was quite remarkable. It is also the least known among the four NGOs that were examined here. It was the NGOs that did the groundwork, research and provided the information and statistics that brought out the conclusion that genocide was committed in Sudan. It was the report of the CIJ that made Colin Powell then the United States Secretary of State to announce that genocide was committed in Darfur by the Sudanese government in collaboration with the Arab militia, the Janjaweed (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 21). Although CIJ does not exist today as an organization because it closed shop in 31 March, 2006, their

contributions to information dissemination in Darfur were very crucial to understanding the nature, scope and extent of the atrocities committed by the Sudanese government backed Arab militia known as the Janjaweed (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 21-22). In July 2004, the United States government under George W. Bush set up the Atrocities Documentation Team (ADT) to investigate the accusations of human rights abuse in the Darfur Region of Sudan. The US government was prompted to do this after the visit of Secretary of State Colin Powell to Darfur for a fact finding mission and the pressure from both the Republicans and Democrats in the United States (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 22-23).

The ADT which was established by the US Department of State now established the Darfur Atrocities Documentation Project (DADP). The ADT then contacted the CIJ to lead the project and investigate the possibilities of genocide in Darfur. The CIJ received funding through the USAID for the project and conducted random interviews with more than one thousand two hundred (1200) refugees in different refugee camps inside Chad (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 24-25). They could not have access to the internally displaced people inside Darfur because the Sudanese government would not grant them access. At the end of the investigation a report was submitted which forms the basis on which Colin Powell concluded that 'genocide has been committed in Darfur, and the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed bear responsibility... and genocide may still be occurring' (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 26).

The CIJ through its interviews and investigation in the refugee camps was able to determine that the Janjaweed supported by the Sudanese government deliberately killed innocent civilians including women, children, and infants (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 23). The investigation also concluded that there were abductions, rape of all genders especially women, use of racial epithets by the Janjaweed against the blacks in Darfur, deliberate destruction of villages that have nothing to do with the rebels, aerial bombardment of villages by the Sudanese air force, theft of livestock, looting and destruction of personal properties (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 200). The investigation also concluded that these atrocities were planned and deliberately executed. They were not random attacks by the brigands and highway robbers as the Sudanese government likes to describe those responsible for the atrocities but well planned and predetermined attacks by the Janjaweed with the help of the government troops (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 200-201).

The work of CIJ is commendable. It was this investigation carried out by the CIJ on behalf of the Atrocities Documentation Team that gave proof to the fact that genocide took place in Darfur. The information provided by this investigation was not based on random reports that cannot be verified but well investigated, researched, and confirmed atrocities perpetrated against innocent and unarmed Darfurians by the Janjaweed Arab

militia simply because they were black people (Totten and Markusen, 2006: 201). The information provided by the CIJ overshadowed all other information that has been coming out from Darfur on the issue of the atrocities committed there by the Arabs against black people. This kind of investigation could be done by an NGO only. It would have been difficult for any government to directly carry out such an investigation without attracting unnecessary attention or without being accused of interference into the internal affairs of another country.

Conclusion

The genocide and other atrocities committed in Darfur by the Government of Sudan are still very fresh in our memories. The world failed the Darfur people because of our inability to carry out humanitarian intervention and exercise the powers of responsibility to protect. However, the NGOs step up and perform wonderfully to fill in where the world represented by the UN failed to inform the world of the happenstances in Darfur. The humanitarian work and services carried out by the NGOs operating inside Darfur and in the Camps inside Chad were great and commendable. They simply saved the lives of thousands of Darfurians. Without the NGOs it would have been difficult if not impossible to provide such humanitarian assistance by any country and even by the United Nations and its organs. Information dissemination was also crucial to understanding what happened and what was still happening inside Darfur and the only way to effectively get this information was through the NGOs that were grounded inside Sudan and those providing humanitarian services in the camps inside the Republic of Chad. The two factors of humanitarian assistance and information dissemination were very crucial to the people of Darfur; the former saved their lives and the latter informed the world of what was happening to them. Without the humanitarian assistance they would have starved to death, which was what the Janjaweed and the Sudanese governments wanted. Without information dissemination they would have been wiped out by the Arabs who wanted them out of the country. In Darfur, humanitarian assistance replaced humanitarian intervention, information dissemination replaced responsibility to protect.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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