

**"Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror" by
Mahmood Mamdani.**

The overarching argument is how the Save Darfur movement politicised the Darfur genocide and established narratives that clearly had an agenda in line with what it considered to be the only possible solution for Darfur: military occupation, amid the 'War on Terror' climate that dominated the national sphere at the time. The designation of it as genocide, the portrayal of it as an ethnic conflict between Arabs and Africans, the discrepancy of the death toll numbers, as well as the numbering itself was political.

The text provides a robust account of the ways in which narratives were constructed to bear a 'growing infatuation with a military solution to the conflict in Darfur,'¹ and the press's complicity in the matter. However, it fails to consider international actors and geopolitical interests and their influence within the broader political milieu.

Mamdani's analysis serves as a case study of Chomsky's framework for *manufacturing consent*. Narratives are constructed and manipulated, and the use of selective information not only has an agenda to shape public opinion and influence international responses, it also seeks to erase divergent historical and political realities.

This text demonstrates the extent to which the public was susceptible to political influence and highlights the limited accountability of the press. It illustrates the complex and disputed nature of genocide and demonstrates how discourse on humanitarian crises can vary significantly depending on the political climate in which they arise.

"Rethinking Identity, Citizenship, and Violence in Sudan" by Amir Idris

The text's central premise is that the racial and ethnic identities that constitute the "Arab"–"African" dichotomy of Western discourse on the Darfur genocide are a construct of colonisation and racialisation. Historical legacy is intertwined with political power and creates political identities due to the creation of the State in relation to society, the rigidity of these identities, and the lack of a political solution to a problem of political violence enacted on marginalised groups. This legacy manifests itself in the present moment at the intersection of identity, citizenship, and violence between groups that purport to be 'fundamentally distinct, absolute, and different from each other.'²

Despite its brevity, the text broadens the lens through which the genocide can be understood, effectively challenging biases often found in scholarship on Sudan. While the argument is compelling, it would benefit from more depth and elaboration.

¹ Mamdani, Mahmood, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (New York: Crown, 2009), p. 35.

² Idris, Amir, "Rethinking Identity, Citizenship, and Violence in Sudan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 44.2 (May 2012), p. 324.

Jérôme Tubiana's "*Darfur: A Conflict for Land?*" also contests the "Arab"–"African" dichotomy by delving into how environmental pressures and economic inequalities have been exploited by political elites and made central to the violence. He challenges the idea that ethnic divisions drive the conflict.

This text presents a sense of teleology that, as Prunier noted, could be dangerous. The coherence helps nonetheless, particularly in a history plagued with narratives that racialise and further divide the victim and perpetrator groups, promoting a biased analysis that obscures any attempt at understanding their shared history.

"The Responsibility to Protect and the Crisis in Darfur" by Paul D. Williams and Alex J. Bellamy

The article makes the contention that the commitment of the international community to the Responsibility to Protect doctrine is based more on 'humanitarian credentials' than any real, 'responsibility-based' action, and this is evident in Darfur. The West's humanitarian interventionism was met with scepticism, and geopolitical interests in Sudan took precedence, along with the peace processes and the civil war. All these factors halted any attempt at effectively carrying out serious humanitarian intervention and raised further doubts about the credibility of those 'humanitarian credentials.'

The text makes clear the interests that served the actions of international actors and provides a comprehensive account for the understanding of international relations at that time. That said, the article would benefit from the incorporation of the evolution of R2P, criticisms of the doctrine's implementation, or analysis of the Westphalian principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and territorial integrity that continue to hinder it to this day.

Anne Orford's criticism of R2P stresses the impossibility of maintaining neutrality.³ The inability of a 'twentieth-century UN to respond to twenty-first century challenges'⁴ is another critique that is crucial to emphasise.

The article makes clear the broader political context surrounding the Darfur genocide and also urges critical examination of the future of humanitarian interventionism. It begs one to question the humanitarian principles the West co-opts for non-humanitarian purposes, inadvertently harming the very communities it commits to protect.

³ Orford, *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect*, pp. 192-193.

⁴ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. *The Failure to Protect: Syria and the UN Security Council*, 2020. <https://www.globalr2p.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/syriapaper_final.pdf> [accessed 2 Mar 2025]

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