

## **CRISIS AND CONSCIENCE: NEWS MEDIA FOR A DEVELOPING WORLD**

### **1) INTRO:**

Paul Cochrane – Journalist, Lebanon

Debra Cole – Lawyer

Hugo Berkeley – Film/TV Producer

### **2) DISCUSSION POINTS:**

- As consumers and potential producers of news, how do we approach international news with a critical eye?
- What makes us good readers of news?
- How can we inform ourselves of bias in the news media?
- Where can we search for alternative news sources?
- What constitutes 'fair and balanced' reporting?
- What can we do to improve the quality of news we receive?

### **3) CASE STUDY: DARFUR**

NEWS SOURCES:

<b>Al-Ahram – Egypt, Newspaper</b>	<b>#:</b>
<b>The Jerusalem Post – Israel, Newspaper</b>	<b>#:</b>
<b>Washington Post – USA, Newspaper</b>	<b>#:</b>
<b>Sudan Tribune – Sudan, Newspaper</b>	<b>#:</b>
<b>Al Jazeera – Qatar, News Service</b>	<b>#:</b>
<b>Xinhua – China, News Service</b>	<b>#:</b>
<b>Tehran Times – Iran, Newspaper</b>	<b>#:</b>

### **4) CONCLUSION**

Please visit <http://och-forum.blogspot.com/> in the days ahead. Follow links to this workshop's discussion forum to contribute your own comments, add links and keep this discussion on-going.

**A.**

### **Bashir: No genocide in Darfur**

The UN estimates at least 200,000 people have died from the combined effect of war and famine since the fighting erupted in February 2003.

Some sources say the toll is much higher.

### **Darfur figures "false"**

Bashir said via a video media conference on Monday: "The figure of 200,000 dead is false and the number of dead is not even 9,000. \_\_\_" "All the figures have been falsified and the child mortality rate in Darfur does not exceed that in Khartoum."

Al-Bashir accused western countries of inflating statistics to justify a military intervention.

"Any talk of a deterioration of the situation in Darfur is false," he said, claiming that only five out of 23 major towns in the region were currently facing security problems.

The US accuses al-Bashir's regime of genocide in Darfur and has pushed for UN peacekeepers to be dispatched there.

The Sudanese president has consistently rejected efforts to replace the African Union observers currently deployed in Darfur, accusing the West of seeking to invade his country and plunder its resource.

**B.**

### **World Court Official Reports Evidence on Darfur Criminals**

As many as 450,000 people have died from disease and violence, and 2.5 million have been displaced in the three-year-old conflict, which began when rebels from African tribes rose up against the Arab-led central government in a huge area of western Sudan. The government has been accused of supporting militias of Arab nomads known as Janjaweed in retaliation against civilians in Darfur. Government officials deny arming the militias, which the United Nations and others have accused of carrying out the worst atrocities.

...

A tentative agreement to boost the 7,000-member African Union force with 10,000 more U.N. troops was reached last week in Ethiopia. Sudan, which has opposed deployment of U.N. troops, has asked for a delay until Wednesday...

Andrew Natsios, the U.S. presidential special envoy to Sudan, said the United States suspects that some Sudanese officials are bent on "a military solution," given three major defeats since August in their push against the rebels. He told a forum at the Brookings Institution this week that the Sudanese military has "now mobilized the Arab militias to attack soft targets, which is to say villages and the displaced camps." If this continues, he warned, no one in the United States would have faith in a negotiating process.

"There is no doubt that the Janjaweed and those who are committing atrocities are an extension of the Sudanese military," Natsios said.

## **C.**

### **From Abuja to Asmara**

Egypt is proposing a strategy for strengthening the African Union peace-keeping force in Darfur by sending troops from Arab and Muslim nations. The French have approved in principle of the Egyptian plan and other Western powers are coming round to the idea of not deploying Western peace-keeping forces after the Afghanistan and Iraqi debacles.

The Egyptian plan, dubbed as a "tripartite mechanism" is as intuitively appealing as it is right. Abul-Gheit stressed that the international community should "not allow a worsening of relations between the UN and Sudan".

The Sudanese authorities are ready to contemplate the deployment of peace-keeping forces from Arab and Muslim nations, but not from Western powers. Khartoum will simply not capitulate on this point.

The United States, however, might see things differently. Indeed, the Democrats at Capitol Hill might prove to be more vehemently censorious of the Sudanese authorities than the Republicans. The Democrats are highly critical of human rights abuses in Darfur.

These rival interpretations of the nature of the Darfur crisis point to substantial difficulties ahead.

**D.**

**Darfur rebels conduct raid on oil field**

Western nations are seeking to deploy UN peacekeepers in the troubled zone, but Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir Monday restated objections to UN troops on the ground, referring instead to a middle ground where UN peacekeepers could support the existing African force currently deployed.

Al-Bashir's comments came as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he was expecting a final commitment from Sudan on a deal reached in principle earlier this month for the UN to conduct a "hybrid mission" with the African Union force in Darfur.

Khartoum had first signaled it was satisfied with the agreement but has since backtracked on the nature of the mission, opposing the idea that peacekeepers and the force's command structure could come from outside the AU.

**E.**

### **Sudan's president against Israel**

Sudan's President Field Marshal Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir claimed Tuesday that reports in western newspapers of hundreds of thousands dead in his country's brutal civil war are all part of an Israeli-led worldwide conspiracy.

In a rambling video-link interview from Khartoum, in which he connected with journalists based in eight different countries, al-Bashir also claimed fatality levels in Darfur were "less than 9,000," instead of a figure of upwards of 400,000 quoted in much of the media, and accepted by the United Nations.

Al-Bashir asserted that all talk of a serious conflict - and accusations that his Government has supported, trained and armed the brutal Arab *Janjaweed* militia, which has displaced, raped and robbed an estimated 2.5 million people in Darfur - were a western conspiracy engineered by Israel to divert attention from the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Palestinian territories.

He also blamed Chad for financing and sponsoring the rebels, and denied any responsibility for supporting the *Janjaweed*.

**F.**

China will continue to play a constructive role in Darfur, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said here on Tuesday.

When asked to comment on the African Union summit's upcoming discussions on Darfur, Ms. Jiang said the developments in Darfur are at a critical juncture.

China appreciated the diplomatic efforts which all parties concerned have made, and hoped they would continue to make candid communication in a steady and pragmatic manner to achieve consensus, Ms. Jiang said. She hoped that all concerned parties will maintain the momentum of dialogue.

## **G.**

### **Sudanese army denies responsibility for attacks in Darfur**

The Sudanese army denied on Saturday carrying any attacks in Darfur and blamed some of the latest bloodshed on janjaweed fighters it accused of being outlaws.

United Nations officials say the janjaweed militia are a pro-government group, and claim that during last month joint army and militia raids have chased more than 60,000 people from their homes in Darfur. The U.N. Humanitarian Chief Jan Egeland recently accused these joint raids of specifically targeting civilians, including children.

The Sudanese military denies backing the janjaweed and dismissed allegations of recent attacks in the south of Darfur.

"Reports that the army has hit in the area of Um Dhai in (South) Darfur are all but void of any truth," military spokesman Brig-Gen. Osman Mohamed al-Aghbash said in an army newspaper.

"The army's duty is to safeguard security and stability, not to engage in killings and looting operations," he said.

## **INFORMATION SOURCES:**

### **News Articles:**

Name of Article: Millions displaced by Darfur crisis ~ report  
Newspaper: Business Day  
Date: Posted to the web on: 28 November 2006  
Address: <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/topstories.aspx?ID=BD4A328643>

Name of Article: The Arabs Are Victims, Too  
Author: Julie Flint  
Date: November 19, 2006  
Newspaper: The Washington Post  
Address:  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/17/AR2006111701483.html>

Name of Article: Bashir denies deal on hybrid force for Darfur  
Author: Opheera McDoom  
Organization: Reuters  
Date: November 28 2006  
Address:  
[http://www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?set\\_id=1&click\\_id=136&art\\_id=qw1164671281475B235](http://www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=136&art_id=qw1164671281475B235)

Name of Article: Darfur rebels conduct raid on oil field  
Newspaper: Tehran Times  
Date: November 29, 2006  
<http://www.tehrantimes.com/Description.asp?Da=11/29/2006&Cat=4&Num=004>

Name of Article: World Court Official Reports Evidence on Darfur Criminals  
Author: Nora Boustany  
Newspaper: The Washington Post  
Date: November 25, 2006  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/24/AR2006112401218.html>

Name of Article: Darfur role to continue: China  
Newspaper: The Hindu Online edition of India's National Newspaper  
Address: <http://www.hindu.com/2006/11/29/stories/2006112903441600.htm>

Name of Article: Darfur rebel: Janjawid re-arming  
Organization: Al Jazeera  
Author: Al Jazeera + agencies  
Newspaper:  
<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/45A25AD1-052B-4475-BFA9-184498892F6D.htm>

Name of Article: Sudan,s Bashir say committed to amend relations with Chad  
Newspaper: Sudan Tribune  
Date: November 28, 2006  
Address: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article18935>

Name of Article: Rights Panel Rejects Darfur Resolution

Author: ALEXANDER G. HIGGINS

Organization: The Associated Press

Date: November 28, 2006

Address:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/28/AR2006112801179.html>

Name of Article: Sudan's president against Israel

Author: David Byers

Newspaper: Jerusalem Post

Date: November 28, 2006

Address:

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1162378504117&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

Name of Article: Not even 9,000 have died in Darfur, claims Sudan president

Organization: AFP

Date: November 28, 2006

Address: <http://www.sudan.net/>

Name of Article: Darfur militias in deadly attacks

Organization: BBC News

Date: 13 November 2006

Address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6144424.stm>

Name of Article Rights Panel Rejects Darfur Resolution

Author ALEXANDER G. HIGGINS

Organization: The Associated Press

Date: November 28, 2006

Address:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/28/AR2006112801179.html>

#### **Sudan news sites:**

Sudan Tribune at <http://www.sudantribune.com/>

Sudan net at <http://www.sudan.net/>

#### **Overviews:**

BBC overview on Sudan:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/country\\_profiles/820864.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/820864.stm)

New York Times on Sudan:

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/sudan/index.html?8qq>

Al-Rayaam Newspaper- (translated from Arabic by google search)

<http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=ar&u=http://www.rayaam.net/&sa=X&oi=translate&resnum=1&ct=result&prev=/search%3Fq%3DA1-Rayaam%2BNewspaper%26hl%3Den%26lr%3D%26r%3DDELA,DELA:2006-07,DELA:en>

**Organizations/ NGOS/ Faith:**

Title: Sudan: Reporter From Independent Daily "Al-Sahafa" Detained  
Incommunicado

Organization: Reporters sans Frontières (Paris)

Type of Document: PRESS RELEASE

Date: November 28, 2006

Address: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200611281106.html>

Title: Learn

Organization: Save Darfur

Type of Document: Background Material on Conflict for would be activists

<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/background>

Organization: International Crisis Group

Type of Document: Collected articles, information and reports on Sudan

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1230&l=1>

Organization: Human Rights Watch

Title: UN-AU Summit Must Strengthen International Force in Darfur and Chad

Type of Document: Human Rights News

Date: November 15, 2006

Address: <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/11/15/darfur14609.htm>

Organization: Amnesty International

Title: Janjawid unleashed: Sudan Government,s solution: Janjawid unleashed  
in Darfur

Type of Document: Act Now

[http://web.amnesty.org/pages/sdn-241106-feature:janjawid\\_unleashed-eng](http://web.amnesty.org/pages/sdn-241106-feature:janjawid_unleashed-eng)

Organization: International Rescue Committee

Title: Darfur: Escalating Violence

Type of Document: Special Report

Address: [http://www.theirc.org/media/www/darfur\\_hope\\_amid\\_the\\_violence.html](http://www.theirc.org/media/www/darfur_hope_amid_the_violence.html)  
(Lot's of good multimedia here as well)

Organization: Christian Aid

Title: Displaced people in Sudanese capital: Displaced people from the south  
of Sudan, who now live in the capital, Khartoum, face voluntary  
repatriations to homes they have not seen for decades.

Date: November 28, 2006

Type of Document: News

Address: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/stories/061128s1.htm>

Organization: American Jewish World Service

Title: Increasing Violence as Sudan Holds off Peacekeeping Force

Type of Document: Darfur Action Committee: Latest News

[http://www.ajws.org/index.cfm?section\\_id=2&sub\\_section\\_id=2&page\\_id=598](http://www.ajws.org/index.cfm?section_id=2&sub_section_id=2&page_id=598)

Organization: ICNA Relief-Helping Hand is a division of the Islamic Circle  
of North America (ICNA).

Title: Humanitarian Disaster in Darfur, Sudan

Address: <http://www.reliefonline.org/sudan/sudan.htm>

**ANSWERS:**

**A. Al Jazeera – Qatar, News Service**

**B. Washington Post – USA, Newspaper**

**C. Al-Ahram – Egypt, Newspaper**

**D. Tehran Times – Iran, Newspaper**

**E. The Jerusalem Post – Israel, Newspaper**

**F. Xinhua – China, News Service**

**G. Sudan Tribune – Sudan, Newspaper**