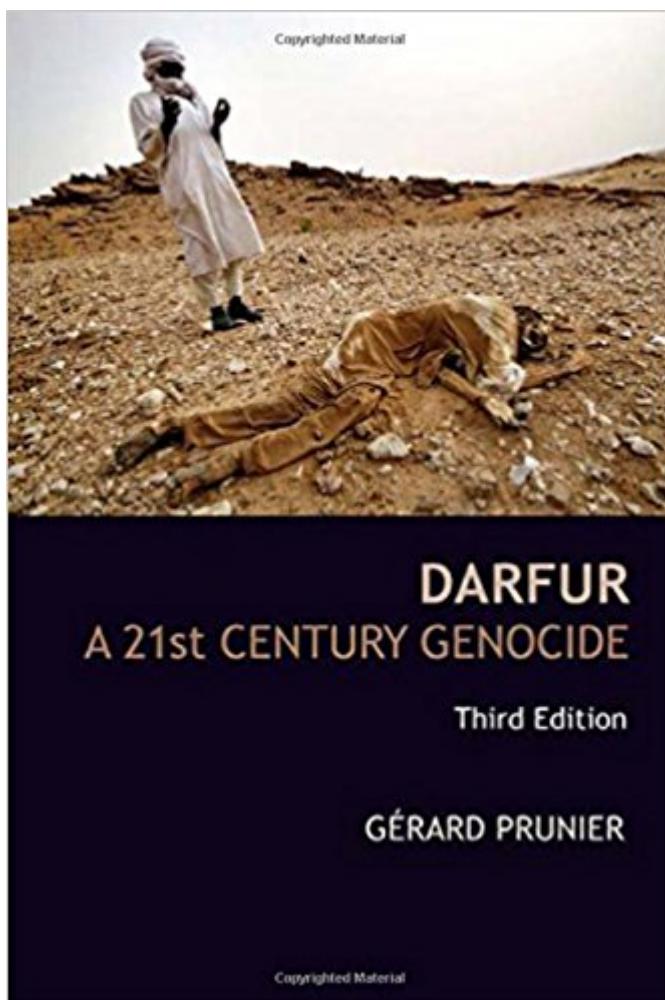


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Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide, Third Edition (Crises In World Politics)



Synopsis

Praise for the 2005 Edition: "A passionate and highly readable account of the current tragedy that combines intimate knowledge of the region's history, politics, and sociology with a telling cynicism about the polite but ineffectual diplomatic efforts to end it. It is the best account available of the Darfur crisis."¹ •Foreign Affairs "Does the conflict in Darfur, however bloody, qualify as genocide? Or does the application of the word 'genocide' to Darfur make it harder to understand this conflict in its awful peculiarity? Is it possible that applying a generic label to Darfurian violence makes the task of stopping it harder? Or is questioning the label simply insensitive, implying that whatever has happened in Darfur isn't horrible enough to justify a claim on the world's conscience, and thus invite inaction or even the dismissal of Darfur altogether? These questions lie at the heart of a much-needed new book by Gerard Prunier. In this book, Prunier casts aside labels and lays bare the anatomy of the Darfur crisis, drawing on a mixture of history and journalism to produce the most important book of the year on any African subject."² •Salon.com "The emergency in Darfur in western Sudan is far from over, as Gérard Prunier points out in this comprehensive and authoritative book. . . . He concisely covers the history, the conflicts, and the players. . . . This book is essential for anyone wanting to learn about this complex conflict."³ •Library Journal "If Darfuris are Muslim, what is their quarrel with the Islamic government in Khartoum? If they and the janjaweed—'evil horsemen'—driving them from their homes are both black, how can it be Arab versus African? If the Sudanese government is making peace with the south, why would it be risking that by waging war in the west? Above all, is it genocide? Gérard Prunier has the answers. An ethnographer and renowned Africa analyst, he turns on the evasions of Khartoum the uncompromising eye that dissected Hutu power excuses for the Rwanda genocide a decade ago."⁴ •The Guardian Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide explains what lies behind the conflict in Western Sudan, how it came about, why it should not be oversimplified, and why it is so relevant to the future of Africa. As the world watches, governments decide if, when, and how to intervene, and international organizations struggle to distribute aid, Gérard Prunier's book provide crucial assistance. The third edition features a new chapter covering events through mid-2008.

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Customer Reviews

"A passionate and highly readable account of the current tragedy that combines intimate knowledge of the region's history, politics, and sociology with a telling cynicism about the polite but ineffectual diplomatic efforts to end it. It is the best account available of the Darfur crisis." •Foreign Affairs, November/December 2005 "The emergency in Darfur in western Sudan is far from over, as Gérard Prunier points out in this comprehensive and authoritative book. . . . He concisely covers the history, the conflicts, and the players. . . . Prunier warns that a conflict crossing many tribes, ethnic groups, and countries with concerns of racial, religious, economic, geographic, and militaristic origin is not likely to end soon. Essential for anyone wanting to learn about this complex conflict; recommended for academic as well as all African and international collections." •Library Journal, August 2005 "During 2003, occasional reports emerged in the international media of fighting in Darfur, a huge tract of western Sudan bordering Chad. Over the next year the picture became confused, as depending on who was doing the talking a minor rebellion became a tribal spat, or nomads taking on farmers, or Arab-versus-African ethnic cleansing, or genocide. An outside world that understood political violence in Sudan through the simplistic lens of the unending war between Muslim north and Christian/animist south a war that seemed to be about to end had to adjust. And nothing that has emerged since has made that adjustment easy. If Darfuris are Muslim, what is their quarrel with the Islamic government in Khartoum? If they and the janjaweed evil horsemen driving them from their homes are both black, how can it be Arab versus African? If the Sudanese government is making peace with the south, why would it be risking that by waging war in the west? Above all, is it genocide? Gérard Prunier has the answers. An ethnographer and renowned Africa analyst, he turns on the evasions of Khartoum the uncompromising eye that dissected Hutu power excuses for the Rwanda genocide a decade ago." •Dominick Donald, The Guardian, 10 September 2005 "Gérard Prunier, a professor at the University of Paris, has performed an unusual feat: He has managed to produce the earliest book-length analyses of two

African genocides. Just one year after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Prunier published *The Rwanda Crisis*; now, ten years later, while Africa is experiencing yet another genocide, Prunier is again the first out of the gate with his analysis. The fact that the book is being published while the genocide is still going on speaks volumes about the international community's ability and willingness to effectively deal with the death and destruction occurring in western Sudan. . . . Prunier does a good job of explaining how, for nearly all of its existence, Darfur has been routinely ignored, marginalized, or exploited by Khartoum, and how this marginalization and exploitation sowed the seeds of the current conflict."•Kyle Mantyla, *American Prospect*, 2 September 2005"This superb analysis offers the best insights to date of a complex tragedy•and much-debated genocide. Highly recommended."•Choice, March 2006"Does the conflict in Darfur, however bloody, qualify as genocide? Or does the application of the word 'genocide' to Darfur make it harder to understand this conflict in its awful peculiarity? Is it possible that applying a generic label to Darfurian violence makes the task of stopping it harder? Or is questioning the label simply insensitive, implying that whatever has happened in Darfur isn't horrible enough to justify a claim on the world's conscience, and thus invite inaction or even the dismissal of Darfur altogether? These questions•and the paradoxical nature of the G-word•lie at the heart of a much-needed new book by Gerard Prunier, a scholar of African affairs. In *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*, Prunier, a professor at the University of Paris, casts aside labels and lays bare the anatomy of the Darfur crisis, drawing on a mixture of history and journalism to produce the most important book of the year on any African subject."•G. Pascal Zachary, *Salon.com*

In mid-2004 the Darfur crisis in Western Sudan forced itself onto the center stage of world affairs. Arab Janjaweed militias, who support the Khartoum government, have engaged in a campaign of violence against the residents of Western Sudan. A formerly obscure 'tribal conflict' in the heart of Africa has escalated into the first genocide of the twenty-first century. In sharp contrast to official reaction to the Rwandan massacres, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell called the situation in Darfur a "genocide" in September 2004. Its characteristics-Arabism, Islamism, famine as a weapon of war, mass rape, international obfuscation, and a refusal to look evil squarely in the face-reflect many of the problems of the global South in general and of Africa in particular. Journalistic explanations of the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe have been given to hurried generalizations and inaccuracies: the genocide has been portrayed as an ethnic clash marked by Arab-on-African violence, with the Janjaweed militias under strict government control, but neither of these impressions is strictly true. *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* explains what lies behind the conflict,

how it came about, why it should not be oversimplified, and why it is so relevant to the future of the continent. Gérard Prunier sets out the ethnopolitical makeup of the Sudan and explains why the Darfur rebellion is regarded as a key threat to Arab power in the country--much more so than secessionism in the Christian South. This, he argues, accounts for the government's deployment of "exemplary violence" by the Janjaweed militias in order to intimidate other African Muslims into subservience. As the world watches, governments decide if, when, and how to intervene, and international organizations struggle to distribute aid, the knowledge in Prunier's book will provide crucial assistance. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The author does a remarkable job of providing the history of Darfur and all of the causes of the on-going genocide, the reasons that any meager attempts to end the suffering has failed, and the current situation. Although this is obviously a very complex environment, the author provides his information in a fashion that is understandable and yet allows the reader to understand the nuances of the situation. It is truly an incredibly sad account of a region of the world whose location has been important over time to both the Sudanese government and also outside players such as Libya and Chad. However, the people who live there have never been important to these same players - in fact their presence has more often than not been an annoyance and their lives have of late been considered expendable. I highly recommend this book, you can't conceive of the horrors that can play out in this world if you don't allow yourself to become informed.

Covers the root cause of this conflict and the external power that support different factions in the war. This area is covered with different rebel groups trying to get better conditions in their respective areas.

Gerard Prunier is known for his rather dense narrative, so I would now recommend picking up this volume as a primer for understanding the conflict in Darfur. Gerard often juggles with words and concepts in a confusing way, but anyone with at least a basic understanding of the African history can rather quickly catch up.

As Yehudit Ronen stated, Prunier rightly labels the response of the international community to the atrocities in Darfur, a "regression of civilization," a description he convincingly argues for in this comprehensive and eye-opening work. In it, he analyzes the historical roots of the conflict in Sudan's western region and discusses why international efforts to halt the tragedy in Darfur have

been so impotent. Prunier takes the reader to the early history of Darfur as an independent sultanate and relates the human movement into the region of people who now constitute Darfur's diverse ethnic makeup. He details the subsequent annexation of Darfur to Sudan and shows how British benign neglect toward the region began an important trend that endured in the era of independence. Prunier surveys the frustration of democratic politics in Darfur and the devastating famine of the mid-1980s in which about 100,000 people died. He addresses the Libyan interference in Darfur to promote Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi's war in Chad. This, he explains, was a critical cause in pitting the Darfurian "Arab" ethnic groups ("tribes" in Prunier's parlance) against their "African," Muslim co-religionists. It was during the chaotic circumstances in the region between 1985 and 1988, Prunier explains, that the pattern of Arab militia attacks on African villages was first established, and atrocities similar in manner, although not in scale, were perpetrated by the dreaded Janjaweed, the "evil horsemen." Prunier describes how the cynical opportunism of Hasan Abdallah al-Turabi, the Arab Islamist who had led Sudan jointly with Omar al-Bashir after 1989, further fuelled the combustible components of the Darfurian reality. Turabi's political machinations aimed at removing Bashir from power and gaining sole leadership of the country. The catastrophic results of this power struggle, won by Bashir, would be played out on the backs of the Darfurians and Sudanese society as a whole. At times bitter, at times scornful, Prunier illustrates the neglect of the international media in bringing the crisis to world attention, largely because of the lack of a catchy angle for another African horror story. Prunier states that the international community also paid little attention to the Darfurian violence due to a combination of reasons, among them the overwhelming desire to finally solve the preexisting Sudanese civil war in the south, the U.S. preoccupation with the insurgency in Iraq, and Khartoum's cooperation in Washington's war on terror. Darfur was thus given a backseat in international priorities as the Janjaweed murdered, pillaged, burned, and raped their way through the region. While not discussing in depth the socioeconomic problems of Sudan--problems crucial in the ignition of the Darfur fire--Prunier contends that it was notions of race in Darfur that led to the horrors there. Despite the ethnic mixing in the region and the blurred racial lines between Africans and Arabs, this distinction was superimposed on the varied ethnic groups of the region, then exploited by the ruling Arab elite in Khartoum. The possibility of a racial alliance between the Darfurian rebels and their southern "brothers" terrified these rulers. Prunier claims that the killing in Darfur should not be seen as genocide, since the aims of the Sudanese government were not to eradicate a people but rather to carry out the brutal suppression of what was seen as an existential threat. Whatever term one uses, however, the carnage and misery unleashed by Khartoum and its Janjaweed cohorts remains just as horrific.

If your heart is not broken reading this book you don't have one. That said, it is written a bit dryly and never goes for the sympathy ploy. It is fully referenced and that makes the reality of how horrible the situation was even worse.

If you will read just one book about Darfur, I can't imagine a better choice. Nothing else I've read so deftly sorts through Darfur's complex history, making clear how geographic, economic, social and political strands of the region's past made it vulnerable to the crimes perpetrated there. Prunier takes a seemingly incomprehensible story and makes it almost perfectly comprehensible. Prunier shatters all the myths and cliches that pervade media accounts of the conflict and so vex critical thinkers, who know that it can't be that simple- that there is more and at the same time, less to the story. His analysis of the Sudan's history is concise, compelling and dead on. Moreover, though the North-South war which raged for over 40 years is not the book's focus, he brilliantly analyzes how that struggle relates directly to Darfur. Chillingly, he explains how, for the Khartoum government, its actions (and inactions) in Darfur are perfectly logical and, from their perspective, quite effective. As one reads Prunier, he can imagine how readers years ago must have been sickened and yet, oddly "reassured "(I can't find the right word) when they realized that the Holocaust was explainable. I say this not to compare Darfur to the Holocaust. Prunier doesn't do that either. What I refer to is the provision of explanation for events so mind-bogglingly horrible that one wants to grasp the causes, yet fears that this can't be done. If you are compelled to understand the historical roots of this horror, order Prunier now.

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