

Save the Children (NGO)



Save the Children.

Organization Background: Non-Governmental Organizations (**NGOs**) are independent non-profit entities that may receive both private and government funding. They often work to relieve suffering, promote the interests of poor and displaced people, protect the environment, provide basic social services, and undertake community development. Most **NGOs** depend on charitable donations and voluntary service, but can receive government funding to carry out specific projects. **NGOs**, though not directly affiliated with any national government, can have a significant impact on the social, economic, and political activity of a country or region in which they operate or are involved.

A number of international **NGOs** identified Darfur as an extremely high priority issue. They worked to influence governments and international organizations and to mobilize citizens around the world to stop the killing in Darfur. **NGOs** can be very effective at giving voice to victims of injustice. However, Save the Children is an NGO that focuses on providing humanitarian assistance and protection for children. It usually avoids taking political stands in volatile areas to avoid antagonizing governments so they may be allowed to continue their work.

A range of humanitarian **NGOs** are active on Darfur, including Oxfam, Care International, and Save the Children. Save the Children began working in Sudan in 1984 to provide aid and emergency response to children and families living in communities affected by conflict. These children continue to face violence, extreme poverty and lack basic services, such as education and health care.

Save the Children and other aid organizations are prevented from delivering assistance in some areas by government forces or government-backed **militias**. Many of the camps in which they work have little or no security, allowing the **Janjaweed** to attack the people for whom they care. Aid workers, local and international, also face danger; several people have been assaulted and killed.

In March 2009, the Government of Sudan expelled 13 international aid organizations including Save the Children and closed three national **NGOs**. The government accused the **NGOs** of collusion with the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** and of overstepping their mandates. Save the Children was supporting 50,000 children in four humanitarian aid camps in Sudan for five years. The removal of the aid groups resulted in a massive drop in assistance to vulnerable populations. Their departure left the aid effort in disarray and put many lives at risk.

The challenges faced by children in Darfur are enormous. Because of ongoing conflict, many live under the constant threat of violence, as well as the possibility of exploitation and abuse. They have inadequate food and water, healthcare, and education. As a result, Sudan has one of the highest infant mortality rates. Many children are growing up knowing only violence and fear.

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Opening Position:

- You want Save the Children to be allowed to return to work in Darfur.
- You believe the welfare of the 50,000 children Save the Children has been protecting and supporting in Darfur is the highest priority of your organization.
- You believe that non-governmental aid workers and observers in Darfur should be allowed access to everywhere there are vulnerable children.
- You believe the government should ensure protection of aid workers. Compounds have been attacked, aid workers have been assaulted and even killed.
- You believe additional international **peacekeepers** would provide more security, better protection for the camps, and for vulnerable communities.
- Save the Children has not abused the hospitality of Sudan and has had no role in the **ICC's** actions regarding President Bashir.

Questions to Consider:

- What conditions are necessary for aid workers to deliver assistance?
- What is beyond the scope of their action?
- What action have **NGOs** taken to ease the humanitarian crisis in Darfur?
- What limits further action by **NGOs**?
- How long will aid be needed?
- What are the short term goals of humanitarian aid? Long term goals?

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