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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION: SUDAN AND SIERRA LEONE, 2000-2010

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Abstract

This study interrogates the divergent outcomes of humanitarian interventions in Sudan and Sierra Leone, raising critical questions about why international efforts succeeded in the latter but faltered in the former. The central problem this research addresses is the inconsistency of global humanitarian engagement: why do similar intervention frameworks yield stability in one context yet exacerbate crisis in another? Adopting a qualitative analytical methodology and the historical method of data collection, the study draws on both primary and secondary sources. It employs the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Theory and Human Security Theory to frame its analysis. In Sudan, despite the presence of over 125 humanitarian organisations, including the Sudanese American Physicians' Association (SAPA), HOPE Sudan, UNFPA, USAID, OCHA, and the ICRC, restricted access, inadequate funding, and delayed diplomatic responses undermined interventions. The ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces has displaced over 10 million people, with aid workers facing lethal risks and peacekeepers unable to safeguard civilians. These cases highlight fragmented international engagement

and a lack of coherent strategy. Conversely, Sierra Leone illustrates how timely deployment, mediation, and collaboration through UNAMSIL and ECOWAS helped disarm rebels and rebuild governance structures, despite initial logistical challenges. The contrast between these cases underscores uneven humanitarian outcomes and highlights the need for strategic coordination, local engagement, and sustained international commitment. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that without coherent strategies and contextual sensitivity, humanitarian interventions risk deepening crises rather than resolving them.

Keywords: *Humanitarian Intervention, Conflict Resolution, International Community, Peacebuilding, Sovereignty*

Introduction

This study examines the extent to which humanitarian interventions in selected African countries have succeeded or failed to protect civilians and foster peace. Humanitarian intervention refers to actions taken by states or international organizations to prevent or stop widespread human suffering within another sovereign State. These interventions often arise in response to genocide, ethnic cleansing, or severe human rights abuses, especially when the local government is unable or unwilling to protect its citizens. Though controversial, such actions are typically justified on moral grounds and may involve military force, economic sanctions, or diplomatic pressure. Notable examples include NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 and the U.S.-led mission in Somalia in 1992.

Humanitarian intervention has emerged as a critical tool for the international community to respond to mass atrocities, protect civilians, and foster peace in conflict-

affected regions.[1] In Africa, the outcomes of such interventions have varied widely, with Sudan and Sierra Leone offering contrasting case studies. Sudan, plagued by decades of civil war, ethnic violence, and political instability, has witnessed repeated international efforts to curb violence and deliver aid. However, interventions such as the UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) have largely failed to protect civilians or prevent renewed conflict.[2] Political resistance, fragmented coordination, and limited access have undermined their effectiveness, leaving millions displaced and vulnerable.

Conversely, Sierra Leone's experience demonstrates the potential success of humanitarian intervention when strategically executed. During its brutal civil war (1991–2002), the country suffered widespread atrocities, including mass killings and the use of child soldiers. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), supported by a decisive British military intervention, helped stabilise the country, disarm combatants, and protect civilians. Post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, including transitional justice mechanisms and democratic reforms, further contributed to lasting peace. This study uses Sudan and Sierra Leone as cases to examine the extent to which humanitarian interventions

[1] C. Bennett, *Understanding the Severity of the Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan*. Atlas Institute for International Affairs. Read the full analysis, 2025, p.45

[2] M. Khachab, *The International Community's Failure to Effectively Intervene in the Sudan Crisis*. Sycamore Institute. Explore the Report, 2024, p.211

can succeed in some areas and fail in others across Africa. By analysing international responses, the study aims to identify key factors influencing the effectiveness of humanitarian action in complex conflict environments.

Statement of the Problem

Humanitarian intervention in African conflict zones remains a deeply contentious issue in international relations. The experiences of Sudan and Sierra Leone illustrate the complexities and dilemmas of external engagement in internal conflicts. In Sudan, protracted civil wars and the Darfur crisis highlighted the State's inability to protect its citizens, raising debates about sovereignty and the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine. Similarly, Sierra Leone's devastating civil war, characterized by mass atrocities and the exploitation of child soldiers, compelled international intervention to restore order and security. Despite the intentions behind these efforts, humanitarian interventions are frequently criticized for their legitimacy, effectiveness, and lasting impact. This study explores whether interventions in Sudan and Sierra Leone genuinely alleviated human suffering and promoted sustainable peace, or if they fostered dependency, compromised sovereignty, and overlooked root causes of conflict. By analyzing these two cases, the research seeks to clarify both the challenges and the potential of humanitarian intervention in African contexts

Theoretical Framework

This research on Sudan and Sierra Leone is anchored in the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Theory and the Human Security Theory. R2P, a doctrine adopted as a global political commitment by all United Nations member states during the 2005 World Summit, was initially developed by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2001. This doctrine arose in response to the international community's shortcomings in addressing atrocities in Rwanda and the Balkans.[3] R2P maintains that sovereignty entails a duty rather than merely a privilege; when a state is either unable or unwilling to safeguard its citizens from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, or crimes against humanity, it becomes the responsibility of the international community to intervene, using peaceful means if possible but military action if necessary. This theory is particularly relevant to the analysis of humanitarian interventions in both Sudan and Sierra Leone. In Sudan, especially during the Darfur crisis, the international community's response was marked by delays and lack of coordination. Political obstacles and absence of consensus among major global actors prevented timely and effective intervention, and as a result, the failure to uphold R2P principles contributed to continued suffering and instability.

[3] J. Pringle, and M. Hunt, *Humanitarian Action. Encyclopedia of Global Bioethics. ResearchGate* Dordrecht: Springer Science + Business Media), Retrieved on 18/08/2025

Conversely, the intervention in Sierra Leone, led by the United Nations and British forces, was more decisive and organized. Their actions helped to disarm rebel forces, end the civil war, and initiate processes for lasting peace and recovery, illustrating that strict adherence to R2P can achieve meaningful civilian protection and post-conflict rebuilding. By applying R2P as a theoretical framework, this study examines the moral and practical realities of humanitarian intervention, highlighting the disparity between stated commitments and actual results in conflict environments.

The Human Security Theory, formally introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its 1994 Human Development Report, represents a significant shift in global security thinking. Rather than focusing solely on the security of states, this theory centers on protecting individuals from chronic threats like poverty, disease, and violence, as well as sudden disruptions such as conflict and natural disasters.[4] Human security is understood through seven distinct dimensions: economic, food, health, environmental, community, and political security. This framework is especially pertinent when comparing humanitarian interventions in Sudan and Sierra Leone. In Sudan, particularly throughout the Darfur crisis, political resistance, restricted access, and persistent violence severely limited the effectiveness of humanitarian efforts. Despite

[4] I. Nunez-Ferrera I. et' al. IDPS in Towns and Cities: Working with the Reality of Internal Displacement in an Urban World. *International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Joint IDP Profiling Service and UN-Habitat,* 2020, p109

international concern, interventions were insufficient to protect civilians or to tackle the fundamental sources of insecurity. The Sudanese government's opposition to external involvement, combined with fragmented aid delivery, left civilians susceptible to displacement, hunger, and targeted violence. From a human security perspective, these interventions did not offer a comprehensive approach to protecting individual and communal well-being. In contrast, Sierra Leone demonstrates a more robust application of human security principles.[5] After a devastating civil war, interventions primarily those led by the United Nations and regional partners not only delivered emergency relief but also emphasized disarmament, reintegration, democratic governance, and the reconstruction of institutions. These efforts addressed multiple facets of human security, contributing to a more peaceful and stable society. By prioritizing civilian protection alongside long-term developmental objectives, the intervention in Sierra Leone embodied the holistic approach advocated by the human security framework. In applying Human Security Theory, this study critically assesses the scope and depth of humanitarian interventions, illustrating why approaches limited to military or political solutions often fall short, and how comprehensive, multidimensional strategies can foster lasting peace and genuinely protect civilians.

[5] C. Bennett, *Understanding the Severity of the Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan*. Atlas Institute for International Affairs. Read the full analysis, 2025, p.46

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Humanitarian Intervention in Sudan: A Case of Failure to Protect and Foster Peace

Humanitarian intervention is often regarded as both a moral duty and an international response intended to shield civilians from severe atrocities and promote peace in regions fraught with conflict. Sudan, which has endured years of political instability, ethnic violence, and civil war, has frequently been the focus of such interventions. Despite numerous attempts by the international community to reduce suffering and restore stability ranging from efforts during the Darfur crisis in the early 2000s to the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) Sudan continues to face one of the gravest humanitarian crises worldwide.[6] This analysis critically explores how humanitarian intervention in Sudan has largely failed to protect civilians and establish peace, using specific examples, international responses, and peacebuilding outcomes for context.

Sudan's recent past has been overshadowed by various conflicts. Events such as the Darfur genocide between 2003 and 2008, the separation of South Sudan in 2011, and the collapse of the democratic transition after the 2019 revolution have all contributed to an unstable environment. The latest violence, which erupted in April 2023 between the SAF

[6] S. A. Issak, Conflicting Perspectives on Humanitarian Intervention: In Light of the Darfur Crisis, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies (JHSSS),* 5 (3), 2016, p.13

and RSF, has resulted in over 13,000 deaths and 33,000 injured as of early 2024.[7] The roots of this conflict lie in a failed power-sharing agreement and the increasing militarization of political groups, made worse by the involvement of both regional and international actors. The United Nations and African Union played significant roles in humanitarian efforts before South Sudan's independence, but their interventions were often fragmented and lacked efficacy. The 2007 deployment of the UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) aimed to protect civilians and support humanitarian aid delivery, but was hampered by limited resources, restricted access, and little cooperation from the Sudanese government.[8] After UNAMID's withdrawal in 2020, violence in Darfur quickly resumed. Similarly, the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), which was established in 2020 to help with democratic transition and peacebuilding, saw its mandate rendered ineffective following the 2021 military coup and the resurgence of civil war. Lacking real enforcement power, UNITAMS could not prevent the escalation of violence or safeguard civilians.

International organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and UN agencies including UNICEF and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have provided essential aid, but

[7] L. Gberie, The Darfur Crisis: *A Test Case for Humanitarian Intervention*, London: Zed Books, 2004, p.76

[8] L. Gberie, The Darfur Crisis: *A Test Case for Humanitarian Intervention*, London: Zed Books, 2004, p.78

their operations are routinely disrupted by attacks on workers, bureaucratic problems, and insecurity. In active conflict zones, only a handful of healthcare facilities remain, leaving millions cut off from basic services. Humanitarian convoys are regularly blocked, looted, or their aid politicized by warring factions.[9]

The shortcomings of humanitarian intervention are most painfully reflected in the lives of ordinary Sudanese. As of early 2025, more than 24.8 million people rely on humanitarian assistance, 17.7 million are suffering from acute hunger, and 3.1 million are at risk of cholera and other diseases. Over 7 million people are internally displaced, with another 1.5 million having fled to countries like Ethiopia, Egypt, and Chad. Infrastructure has been decimated, financial systems have collapsed, and essential services such as water and energy are in disarray. Children are particularly hard-hit, with over 19 million out of school and many at risk of being drawn into armed groups.[10] Women and girls endure widespread sexual violence, routinely used as a tactic of war. The RSF, which originated from the Janjaweed militias, have carried out scorched-earth campaigns, deliberately targeting civilian areas to gain control and displace populations, often bombing hospitals, markets, and refugee camps in violation of international humanitarian law.

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[9] J. Donnelly, *International Human Rights.* 3rd ed., Boulder, Colorado: Sudan: Westview Press. CIA Fact Book, 2007, p.38

[10] Roberts, A. Intervention, one step forward in search of the impossible, International Journal of Human Rights 7(3), 2003, p.144.

The Juba Peace Agreement, signed in October 2020, was initially seen as a significant step toward peace by aiming to bring rebel groups into a unified political structure, enforce a permanent ceasefire, and address the roots of conflict. Yet the deal faltered due to a lack of real commitment from many signatories, internal political strife, and inadequate resources.[11] The 2021 coup nullified the agreement, sidelining civilian leaders and reigniting conflict. Following the 2019 ousting of President Omar al-Bashir, Sudan attempted a transition to democracy with support from international donors and institutions. The transitional government promised reforms, justice for war crimes, and inclusive governance, but the military retained power and the RSF grew more influential, aided by their control of gold mining and patronage networks. The October 2021 coup led by General Burhan dismantled the civilian government, provoking renewed violence. Despite swift international condemnation, diplomatic efforts and sanctions failed to reverse the situation or prevent further bloodshed.[12]

Ultimately, the fundamental aim of humanitarian intervention to protect civilians has not been achieved in Sudan. The continued presence of peacekeepers and aid organizations has not alleviated the existential threats faced by civilians. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle, which compels the international community to

[11] J. Flint De Waal*, A. Darfur: A Short History of A Long War*. London: Zed Books, 2005, p.218

[12] J. Flint De Waal*, A. Darfur: A Short History of A Long War*. London: Zed Books, 2005, p.218

prevent mass atrocities, has also proven ineffective in Sudan, echoing similar failures in Syria and Yemen. The United Nations' dependence on member states for peacekeeping troops, driven by their own interests, has limited its capacity to enforce mandates. Without a standing force or strong authority, the UN cannot force warring parties to stop fighting or protect vulnerable groups.[13]

Humanitarian initiatives in Sudan are fragmented and lack coordination, with various actors competing for resources and influence under overlapping mandates. The political resolve among international stakeholders is minimal; donor fatigue, internal priorities, and geopolitical rivalries have shifted focus away from Sudan's crisis. Reports suggest that countries like Egypt and the UAE have provided support to opposing factions, prolonging the conflict through arms and financial aid. Peacebuilding efforts in Sudan have been largely reactive, offering short-term relief rather than addressing deeper issues such as land disputes, ethnic marginalization, and economic inequality. There is little local involvement in peace processes and civil society is often excluded from key decisions. The absence of mechanisms for transitional justice and accountability for war crimes further undermines trust and reconciliation.[14]

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[13] K. K. Pease, and D. P. Forsythe, Human rights, humanitarian intervention, and world politics, *Human Rights Quarterly* 15(2), 2013, p. 296

[14] M. Khachab, *The International Community's Failure to Effectively Intervene in the Sudan Crisis*. Sycamore Institute. Explore the Report, 2024, p.8

Sudan's experience exposes the limitations of conventional peacekeeping and humanitarian aid models. Regional bodies like the African Union need to assume a more active role in resolving conflicts—some analysts recommend establishing a contact group to oversee diplomatic initiatives and better coordinate humanitarian efforts. International organizations must reform their funding and deployment strategies to ensure timely and effective intervention. Justice is also fundamental to lasting peace: international courts should investigate and prosecute war crimes by all parties, and peacebuilding frameworks should include transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions and reparations, to encourage reconciliation and deter future abuses. Empowering Sudanese civil society remains essential for building sustainable peace.

Suffice it to say, therefore, that humanitarian intervention in Sudan has largely failed to protect civilians or achieve peace. After decades of international involvement, the country remains entrenched in violence, displacement, and humanitarian misery. These failures stem from insufficient mandates, poor coordination, weak political will, and ineffective peacebuilding strategies. Sudan's case demonstrates the urgent need for a new approach to humanitarian intervention one that emphasizes protection, accountability, and local empowerment. Only through persistent, strategic, and inclusive efforts can the international community hope to meet its moral and legal obligations to the people of Sudan.

Humanitarian Intervention in Sierra Leone: A Success Story

Humanitarian intervention is often viewed as a last resort to prevent mass atrocities and restore peace in conflict-ridden societies. Sierra Leone, a West African nation ravaged by a brutal civil war from 1991 to 2002, stands as a compelling case study of how international intervention can succeed in protecting civilians and fostering long-term peace. The war, notorious for its use of child soldiers, amputations, and systematic sexual violence, left over 50,000 dead and millions displaced.[15] In response, the international community launched a series of coordinated military, diplomatic, and humanitarian interventions that ultimately helped stabilize the country. This study examines the extent to which humanitarian intervention in Sierra Leone succeeded, focusing on international responses, their impact on civilians, peacebuilding outcomes, and broader assessments of effectiveness.

The Sierra Leone Civil War began in 1991, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), backed by Liberian warlord Charles Taylor, launched an insurgency against the government. The conflict quickly devolved into a humanitarian catastrophe. Civilians were caught between government forces, rebel factions, and local militias, suffering widespread atrocities including mass killings, rape, and mutilation. The war became infamous for the forced recruitment of child soldiers and the use of terror tactics to control diamond-rich

[15] R Thakur, In Defence of Responsibility to Protect, International Journal of Human Rights 7(3), 2003, p.166

territories.[16] By the late 1990s, the situation had deteriorated to the point where the international community could no longer ignore the crisis. The United Nations, the United Kingdom, and regional actors began intervening, marking the start of a multi-pronged humanitarian effort.

The United Nations played a pivotal role in Sierra Leone's recovery. In 1999, the UN established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to implement the Lomé Peace Agreement, disarm combatants, and protect civilians. UNAMSIL eventually became one of the largest UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, deploying more than 17,000 troops at its peak. In 2000, following the abduction of UN personnel by RUF forces, UNAMSIL's mandate was expanded. With increased troop strength and a more robust mandate, the mission made significant progress in stabilizing the country. UN peacekeepers helped secure major towns, facilitated humanitarian aid delivery, and supported the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of over 75,000 combatants.[17]

The United Kingdom's 2000 intervention was a turning point. British forces launched Operation Palliser to evacuate foreign nationals and stabilize the capital,

[16] R Thakur, In Defence of Responsibility to Protect, International Journal of Human Rights 7(3), 2003:160-178.

[17] J. J. Welling, J. J., Non-governmental Organizations, Prevention, and Intervention in Internal Conflict: Through the Lens of Darfur. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 14(1), 2007, p.149

Freetown. However, their role quickly expanded to include direct military engagement with rebel forces. The British trained Sierra Leone's army, provided logistical support, and helped restore government control over key areas. The British intervention was widely acknowledged as successful. According to the Royal United Services Institute, Sierra Leone is often cited as a model for effective post-conflict stabilization because of the decisive, coordinated nature of British involvement.

International NGOs and UN agencies such as UNICEF, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and the World Food Programme (WFP) provided critical humanitarian assistance. These organizations delivered food, medical care, and psychosocial support to displaced populations and war-affected communities. UNICEF played a key role in rehabilitating child soldiers, offering education and vocational training to reintegrate them into society. The humanitarian response also included support for survivors of sexual violence and amputations. Specialized clinics and counseling centers were established to address the physical and psychological trauma inflicted during the war.[18]

The interventions had a profound impact on civilian protection and welfare. UNAMSIL's presence deterred rebel attacks in many regions, allowing displaced persons to return home. The DDR program helped reduce the number of armed actors, lowering the risk of renewed violence. British military support restored public confidence in State

[18] Flint J, De Waal*, A. Darfur: A Short History of A Long War*. London: Zed Books, 2005. p.44

institutions, particularly the army and police. Humanitarian aid alleviated immediate suffering and laid the groundwork for recovery. Access to healthcare, education, and food security improved significantly in the post-war years. While challenges remained, such as poverty and unemployment, the overall trajectory was positive.

Two major transitional justice mechanisms were established: the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The SCSL, set up in 2002, prosecuted those "most responsible" for war crimes, including former Liberian President Charles Taylor. Although Taylor's trial took place in The Hague, his conviction sent a strong message about accountability.[19] Also established in 2002, the TRC aimed to document human rights abuses and promote reconciliation. Its final report, released in 2004, provided a comprehensive account of the conflict and recommended reforms to prevent future violence. While the TRC faced criticism for limited outreach and lack of reparations, it contributed to national healing and dialogue.

Sierra Leone has held multiple peaceful elections since the end of the war, signaling progress in democratic consolidation. The country transitioned from a fragile post-conflict State to a functioning democracy with active civil society and media. The UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), which succeeded UNAMSIL, supported governance reforms, anti-corruption efforts, and capacity building until its closure in 2014.

[19] A. Roberts, Intervention, one step forward in search of the impossible, *International Journal of Human Rights* 7(3), 2003, p.142

International donors supported post-conflict recovery through programs targeting infrastructure, education, and health. The government's "Agenda for Prosperity" (2013–2018) aimed to reduce poverty and promote inclusive growth.[20] While economic challenges persist, Sierra Leone has made strides in rebuilding institutions and improving public services.

While economic challenges persist, Sierra Leone has made strides in rebuilding institutions and improving public services, illustrating how factors like timely support and local capacity influence intervention success.

Nonetheless, these challenges do not overshadow the intervention's overall effectiveness. As noted by Newman, Sierra Leone's progress demonstrates that "concerted international action can yield positive results.[21] Humanitarian intervention in Sierra Leone protected civilians and fostered peace through a coordinated, multifaceted approach. UN peacekeeping, British military support, and humanitarian aid helped end a devastating civil war and set the country on a path to recovery. While challenges remain, Sierra Leone's experience offers valuable lessons for future interventions: the importance of timely action, integrated strategies, and local empowerment. In a world where humanitarian crises

[20] M Ayoob, Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty, *Journal of Human Rights* 6(1), 2010, p.84

[21] E. Newman, Humanitarian Intervention, Legality, and Legitimacy, *International Journal of Human Rights* 6(4), 2002, p.107

continue to proliferate, Sierra Leone stands as a rare example of how international engagement can make a meaningful difference.

A Comparative Analysis between Sudan and Sierra Leone Humanitarian Interventions

Humanitarian intervention, broadly defined as the use of external actors to prevent or end widespread suffering within a sovereign State, has yielded mixed outcomes across Africa. Two striking examples are Sudan and Sierra Leone, which experienced brutal internal conflicts but saw vastly different results from international humanitarian efforts. While Sierra Leone emerged from its civil war with relative peace and stability, Sudan, particularly the Darfur region, remains a cautionary tale of fragmented intervention and enduring violence. This analysis explores the political, operational, and contextual factors that explain the divergence in outcomes.

Sierra Leone's civil war (1991–2002) was marked by widespread atrocities, including mass killings, amputations, and the use of child soldiers. However, the conflict was largely contained within national borders and involved identifiable rebel factions such as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). This made it easier for international actors to negotiate ceasefires and implement disarmament programs. In contrast, Sudan's conflict, especially in Darfur (2003 onward), was more complex. It involved multiple armed groups,

ethnic tensions, and a government accused of complicity in genocide.[22] The Sudanese government's denial of atrocities and obstruction of aid efforts severely hampered humanitarian access. The conflict also spilled across borders, destabilizing neighboring regions and complicating international response.

Sierra Leone benefited from strong international consensus and political will. The United Nations, the United Kingdom, and regional bodies such as ECOWAS coordinated efforts to restore peace. The UK's 2000 military intervention was decisive, helping to stabilise Freetown and support the disarmament process. The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was well-resourced and had a clear mandate to protect civilians and support post-conflict recovery. Sudan, by contrast, had geopolitical paralysis. The government's strategic importance, stemming from its oil reserves and regional alliances, made global powers reluctant to confront Khartoum directly.[23] The UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) faced severe restrictions, underfunding, and limited authority. As a result, it struggled to protect civilians or enforce peace agreements.

A critical factor in Sierra Leone's success was the post-conflict government's cooperation. After the ousting of the RUF, the Sierra Leonean government worked closely

[22] S. A. Issak, S. A. Conflicting Perspectives on Humanitarian Intervention: In Light of the Darfur Crisis, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies (JHSSS),* 5 (3), 2016, p.13

[23] J Pringle. and M. Hunt. *Humanitarian Action. Encyclopedia of Global Bioethics. ResearchGate* Dordrecht: Springer Science + Business Media), Retrieved on 18/08/2025

with international actors to rebuild institutions, promote reconciliation, and reintegrate former combatants. This partnership enabled humanitarian agencies to operate freely and effectively. In Sudan, the government was often hostile to foreign intervention. It restricted access to conflict zones, expelled aid workers, and manipulated humanitarian aid for political purposes. This lack of cooperation undermined efforts to protect civilians and foster peace. The Sudanese regime's resistance to accountability, exemplified by its rejection of the International Criminal Court's indictment of President Omar al-Bashir, further eroded trust and legitimacy.[24]

Furthermore, in Sierra Leone, humanitarian aid was integrated with broader peacebuilding strategies. Programs addressed not only immediate needs like food and shelter but also long-term goals such as education, governance reform, and economic development. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Special Court for Sierra Leone helped promote justice and healing. Sudan's intervention lacked this integration. Humanitarian aid was often delivered separately from political and development efforts. Without a unified strategy, aid did little to address the conflict's root causes. Moreover, the fragmented nature of Sudan's opposition groups made inclusive peace processes difficult to implement.

[24] I. P. Olanrewaju, '' *The Conceptual Analysis of Peace and Conflict''*. In K. Soremekun (ed.) Readings in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, 2013, p.41

Sierra Leone's relatively small size and homogeneous population made it easier to implement nationwide programs. The country's location in West Africa also meant that regional bodies like ECOWAS had a vested interest in its stability and could mobilize quickly. Sudan's vast geography and ethnic diversity posed significant challenges. The Darfur region alone is home to dozens of ethnic groups with historical grievances. The conflict's intersection with Arab-African identity politics added layers of complexity. Regional actors such as the African Union responded slowly and lacked the capacity to enforce peace.[25]

The contrasting outcomes of humanitarian intervention in Sudan and Sierra Leone underscore the importance of context, political will, and strategic coordination. Sierra Leone's success resulted not merely from external aid but from timely intervention, government cooperation, and integrated peacebuilding. Sudan's failure, conversely, highlights the limits of humanitarian efforts without political consensus, access, and accountability. This comparative analysis reveals that humanitarian intervention is not a one-size-fits-all solution. For interventions to succeed, they must be tailored to each conflict's specific dynamics, supported by robust international commitment, and aligned with the needs and aspirations of affected populations. As future crises emerge, the lessons

[25] J. J. Welling, Non-governmental Organizations, Prevention, and Intervention in Internal Conflict: Through the Lens of Darfur. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 14(1), 2007, p.148

from Sudan and Sierra Leone offer valuable guidance for crafting more effective and humane responses.

Conclusion

In conclusion, humanitarian intervention in Sudan failed to protect civilians and foster peace because of fragmented international coordination, limited access for aid agencies, and resistance from national actors. UN missions lacked robust mandates and enforcement capacity, while peace agreements were undermined by political instability and renewed violence. Civilians faced mass displacement, hunger, and targeted attacks, with little accountability or sustainable recovery. In contrast, Sierra Leone's intervention succeeded because of decisive military support, coherent UN peacekeeping, and genuine cooperation from the national government. Integrated efforts combining disarmament, humanitarian aid, and transitional justice enabled civilian protection and long-term peacebuilding. The Sierra Leone case underscores that success in humanitarian intervention depends not only on international presence but also on strategic coordination, local ownership, and sustained commitment to rebuilding institutions and trust in post-conflict societies.

Having examined a comparative analysis of humanitarian interventions in Sudan and Sierra Leone, 2000-2010, the paper makes the following recommendations.

i. Encourage stronger collaboration between the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and neighbouring states to ensure timely intervention, coordinated peacekeeping, and shared responsibility in humanitarian crises.

ii. Establish clearer frameworks for monitoring humanitarian actors and governments, ensuring interventions respect human rights, avoid exploitation, and deliver aid transparently.

iii. Focus interventions on safeguarding vulnerable populations (women, children, displaced persons) through safe zones, rapid response units, and stronger enforcement of international humanitarian law.

iv. Move beyond short-term relief by supporting long-term development: rebuilding institutions, promoting reconciliation, and strengthening education and healthcare systems to prevent relapse into conflict.

v. Align international humanitarian efforts with local NGOs, community leaders, and civil society to ensure culturally sensitive approaches and sustainable outcomes.

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