

# HUMANITARIAN FRAMES AND HUMANITARIAN SOFT POWER IN DARFUR:

## *ADVOCACY FRAMES IN A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS*

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### ABSTRACT

Conflict in Darfur has raged since 2003, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and advocacy groups have been supporting efforts to quell the violence and bring stability and humanitarian relief to Darfur. Both operational NGOs working from Darfur and advocacy groups, not directly working within Darfur, have specific messages and soft power (versus military or hard power) strategies, they employ.

Operational NGOs limit the frames they employ because negatively framing the Sudanese government would cause governmental retaliation and could end humanitarian efforts in Darfur. This was the case in 2009, when 13 NGOs were thrown out of Sudan, after the International Criminal Courts (ICC) indicted then leader, al-Bashir. The Sudanese government accused NGOs of offering evidence to the ICC leading to that indictment.

Conversely, advocacy NGOs have the full range of framing, whereas operational NGOs seem to only be able to provide information about victims of conflict. The frames used allow NGOs to gain advocacy and donor support by persuading their audiences. For U.S. advocacy groups, messages ask for citizen action and donation; however, operational groups ask for donations on the grounds of humanitarian relief and aid.