



Propaganda in the crisis of Darfur Region of Sudan

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Abstract

Sudan is one of the countries in Africa known with series of crises that lasted for long time since 1960s. The current crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan started in 2003 when two armed groups attacked government installations and the government retaliated violently. Over the years, the crisis took different dimensions and several strategies, introduced by the actors in the crisis. One of the strategies implored in the crisis was propaganda which is another instrument of war. The crisis has resulted to heavy loss of lives and properties. The humanitarian situation in Darfur continues to deteriorate on daily basis. A lot of interrogations concerning the crisis have been raised such as the causes and consequences, but no significant discussions have been made on propaganda in the Darfur crisis. As a weapon of war, knowing how propaganda was used in the Darfur crisis will help in finding a roadmap to abate the war. This work therefore examines propaganda in the Darfur region of Sudan crisis. It is a qualitative research which relied on secondary source of data and anchored on communication theory for its analytical framework. The paper revealed that the various actors in the war implored the use of propaganda as an instrument of war. It is the opinion of the paper that the use of massive propaganda in the war by the various actors has kept the war unabated without ending in sight. The paper therefore recommends among others that the actors in the Darfur crisis should stop the engagement in massive propaganda. International community including the various international organizations should help to control the use of propaganda in the crisis.

Keywords: Propaganda, Darfur crisis, Sudan, communication theory, humanitarian, international community.

I. Introduction

The Darfur crisis started in February 2003 when two armed groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) took up arms against the Khartoum government by attacking government administrative centre, police stations and civilians in El Fashir, capital of Northern Darfur. The government of Sudan responded vigorously thereby escalating the crisis leading to serious humanitarian crisis. International communities were alerted to the crisis which continued to rage in several dimensions. The crisis witnessed massive use of propaganda as a major instrument of war by the various actors in the crisis.

To realize the aims of propaganda, different techniques were employed by the actors involved, ranging from name-calling, bandwagon, glittering generality, transfer, plain folks, testimonial, selection, frustration scapegoat, censorship, disinformation, denials, to military actions. A combination of different techniques rather than a single technique were used by the parties or actors involved in the crisis. The channels of propaganda as exhibited in the Darfur crisis has been mainly radio and television broadcast, various Newspapers, magazines, posters and rumor mongering. The issues on which propaganda has been carried on in the Darfur crisis is limitless as almost every new day of the crisis gave birth to new issues which propaganda can be carried on. This explains the reason why propaganda cannot be isolated or ignored in the discussion of the Darfur crisis. Propaganda featured very conspicuously from the beginning of the Darfur crisis. This paper therefore examines propaganda in the crisis of Darfur region of Sudan. The paper is a qualitative analysis which relied on secondary source of information and anchored on communication theory as its theoretical framework of analysis. Communication theory involves sending and receiving messages from one end to the other. It entails the understanding between people which could be through verbal or non verbal means in order



to affect the behavior of the people. The proponents of communication theory includes Deutsch (1963), Mackenzie (1969), Kaplan (1957), Harold Lasswell (1948), Donsback (2006), Pennmam (2000), Anderson and Brym (2009), Lindolf and Taylor (2002), D'angelo (2002) and Jinenez and Guillen (2009). The communication theories have been used as analytical tool of politics and social issues. The notion of communication network, channels of information and procedure of communication, rules and instruments of communication, classification of feedbacks are useful as analytical tool. Communication theory helps in the analysis of propaganda in the Darfur crisis as the source, sender, channels, receivers, destination, message and feedback system helps in knowing how propaganda was being sent out by various actors in the Darfur crisis. This work will help to know the impact of propaganda in crisis situations especially in the Darfur crisis and the need for World powers and international organizations to take action on how to abate the Darfur crisis.

Conceptualisation of Propaganda

Propaganda has been defined in many ways by several scholars at different times and no one definition is widely accepted as the only recognized definition of propaganda. According to Barukh, (1982) the word propaganda could be likened to the gardener's practice to disseminate plants by planting shoots. Defining propaganda therefore has always been a problem because of its difficulties in differentiating it from other types of persuasion. Joweth & O'Donnell (2005) defined propaganda as a deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitive, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired interest of the propagandist. This seems a workable definition. Richard Alan Nelson, (1996) defined propaganda as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages which may or may not be factual via mass and direct media channels. The above definitions focus mainly on the communicative process involved, precisely on the purpose of the process and allow propaganda to be considered objectively, and then interpreted as positive or negative behaviour depending on the perspective of the viewer or listener. Ghosh (2009) noted that propaganda is more like psychological warfare targeted at specific groups. He stressed further that it is usually an attempt to persuade or influence leaders

as well as the general population of other countries. To him, since propaganda is generally directed at the enemy of those who are hostile, it involves the manipulation of facts and symbols to attain the desired effects on the minds of an audience. Couloumbis & Wolfe (1981) defined propaganda as a process involving a communicator whose intention is to change the attitudes, opinions and behaviour of a target population using spoken, written and behavioural symbols and employing media such as books, pamphlets, films, lectures, and so on. This definition focuses very much on the means and processes of communication which is very vital to the study of propaganda. Terence (1962) defined propaganda as a deliberate attempt by some individuals or groups to control or alter the attitude of other groups by the use of the instruments of communications with the intention that those so influenced will be that desired by the propagandist. The phrase, "deliberate attempt" is very important in Terence's definition because it distinguished propaganda from non-propaganda. Terence recognized an act as propaganda only if and when it becomes part of a deliberate campaign to induce action through the control of attitudes.

Akpotor (2011) defined propaganda as, deliberate efforts by governments to influence the attitudes and behaviour of foreign populations or of specific ethnic, class or religious, economic or linguistic groups within those populations in the expectation that, such influenced groups could in turn influence the attitude and actions of their own government. Akpotor's definition laid emphasis on the phrase deliberate efforts like in Terence's definition. This definition of propaganda embraced both domestic and international governmental efforts. However, one might view it as a shortcoming because it emphasized only government organization in propaganda consideration. Private organizations and individuals also employ the use of propaganda in one way or the other. However, for the purpose of this research, Akpotor's work is very relevant and helpful.

Frankel (1979) also defined propaganda as any systematic attempt, to affect the minds, emotions and actions of a given group of people, for a specific public purpose. Frankel qualified his definition by pointing out its basic characteristic. To him, propaganda is always addressed to the people of any group in any organization for the purpose of any vital interest of the propagandist. Frankel's definition covers all areas within which propaganda could be applied. This includes government's organizations and individuals. Rodee et al (1983) further defined propaganda as the propagation of ideas through



promotion, persuasion and the utilization of influence. Rodee's definition does not encourage the use of force in the promotion and propagation of ideas; rather persuasive means such as lobbying are ways of promoting ideas. This is very relevant to electioneering campaigns and other governmental processes.

Truman (1951) is also recognized as one of the scholars that have done extensive and useful study of propaganda. He viewed propaganda as any attempt by the manipulation of words and words substitutes and consequently the behaviour of a number of individuals concerning controversial matter. In Truman's own view, propaganda is important only when there is a controversial issue. This refers to crisis situation which could be issues of domestic or external affairs. The shortcoming of Truman's work is that the word controversial was not given clear definition. Its meaning might vary from one person, group or government to another. In addition to the above, propaganda which is not limited to any particular issue, could be used in many forms, whether controversial or not. In other words, propaganda can be useful in non-conflict situations, as pointed out above. Irion (1950) defined propaganda as one sided effort to present information usually by secret or undercover method which the author knows to be at least partially false. Irion went further to point out that these groups may emphasize the use of such devices as the concealed sources, distortion, suppression or fabrication and non rational appeals, i.e. appeals to the emotions or to the affections rather than to reason. It is true to some extent that propaganda takes some secret methods in carrying out its message; however the use of scientific communication devices might expose such secrecy. Adversaries could use the scientific communication appliances to discover their opponent's propaganda techniques and therefore suppress its spread. Another work on propaganda that is useful to this research is that of Sills (2005) in the New Encyclopedia Britannica which viewed propaganda as a psychological warfare which is the prewar or wartime use and directed primarily at confusing or demoralizing enemy populations or troops, putting them off guard in the face of coming attacks or inducing them to surrender.

The above definition summarizes the meaning of propaganda exclusively in crisis period which could be pre-war or wartime situation or both. Therefore propaganda could be defined as the manipulation of attitudes and opinions of people through words, gestures, flags, music and lectures. It is also a way of inspiring the audience to act in a particular way to the wish of the propagandist.

Propaganda in Darfur Crisis

The actors in the Darfur region of Sudan crisis implored the use of propaganda as a weapon of war in many ways as discussed below.

Categorization and Dichotomization of the citizens of Darfur

One of the ways propaganda was used in the Darfur crisis is the categorization and dichotomization of the citizens of Darfur into either villagers or nomads. According to Ahmed (1976) and Khalifa (2006), the categorization of herding into pastured nomads involving herders who regularly move with their families in search of pasture and water and semi-nomads involving those who leave part of their family behind while the remainder move in search of pasture and water and transhumance involving the pastorals practiced by sedentary people whose primary economic activity is agriculture. Apart from the above, many other forms of categorization were made. Prunier (2005) noted that numerous classification schemes, some benign, some racist have been attempted since the past several centuries. The Hermitic Arabs are said to be lighter skinned while the Black Africans are darker skinned. This categorization above perpetuated by the government of Sudan was nothing but propaganda purposely to win the support of the population in Darfur. This was glittering generality technique of propaganda. Also in Darfur, the blacks are referred to as Zurga in a derogatory manner. This is to depict that the Black Africans are inferior to the Arabs. According to Chehade (2005) in Sudan, being Arab refers to one's physical appearance and more to one's state of mind. The Sudanese government capitalized on this age-long slogan in order to win the support of the supposed superior population of the Arabs. This is purely name calling type of propaganda.

Limitation of the activities of the humanitarian organizations

The Sudan government continued to implement policies intended to limit the activities of the humanitarian organizations to freely access the requirement and immediate needs of the displaced persons in Darfur. It is obvious that if the needs of the IDPS are not well known to humanitarian operators, they cannot be provided with such basic needs. Through the policies of delay of travel documents such as visa, customs procedure and other travel documents, humanitarian agents pass through cumbersome means to enter the designated areas of the IDPS to access their needs, without which nothing could be done to ease their sufferings. Dagne



(2004) noted that the government of Sudan disallowed the Disaster Assistance Responses Team (DART), established by USAID, for Darfur into Darfur. The 28 member team of DART were refused visa by government of Sudan. Reuters (2011) however noted that most of the delays and denials of access imposed by Khartoum for security purposes are nothing more than the regimes determination to keep prying international eyes from observing the regime's actions and the often deadly consequences of antecedent violence. The Khartoum government engaged in accusing the USAID of being too sympathetic to the rebels. This was to enable the government to effectively carry out the restrictive policies that will disallow the humanitarian agents to enter into Darfur while the IDPS continued to suffer. According to USAID, due to GOS (Government of Sudan) impediments that block travel permits and relief operations in Darfur, humanitarian access to vulnerable population outside of the state capitals of Geneina, Al Fashir and Nyala is extremely limited and access to many areas is completely denied. This is no doubt, frustration scapegoat technique of propaganda with a view to win the mind and support of his followers and also to demoralize his enemies, mainly the rebels and the people of Darfur. The Sudanese government continued to suppress information by jailing, killing witnesses and tampering with evidences such as mass graves so as to cover up. Journalists were not only obstructed from getting real information, they were also being arrested so as not to cover the events of Darfur crisis. This is another propaganda ploy by the government of Sudanese, mainly to demoralize the enemies, which are the Darfur population and the rebels. The above is censorship type of propaganda.

The Sudanese government severally objected to the proposals of the United Nations and the African Unions to finding solutions to the problems of Darfur crisis. For example, on the 31st of August, 2006, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1706 which called for a new 26,000 troops UN peacekeeping force called UNAMID to supplement a poorly funded and ill-equipped 7,000 troops of African Union mission in Sudan peacekeeping force. The Sudanese government strongly objected to the resolution and noted that it would see the UN forces in the region as foreign invaders. This is frustration scapegoat and denial form of propaganda targeted against the people of Darfur with the intention of demoralizing them.

Propaganda of Religion

In the Darfur crisis, religion has been used as propaganda mainly by the government of Sudan. The government of Sudan put herself in a position of protector of Islam in the entire country especially, after making Islam the state religion of the Republic of Sudan. Opponents are viewed as anti-Islam and any war against them is considered as a Jihad or Holy war, and any Moslem that takes part in Holy war is assured of heaven. The Muslims in Darfur are regarded as inferior Moslem and they are accused of practicing Sufism, a religious way of combining Islam with African traditional religion. Moslem faithful in Darfur were called upon to fight the infidels, who were also referred to as Animist. This is bandwagon form of propaganda, targeted against the Darfur population.

The Sudanese administration that came into power in 1989 rallied on Islamism to gain supports of the entire Sudanese population including Darfur region. It was a process of making every citizen of Sudan including Darfur to support Islam as the state religion. This was bandwagon technique of propaganda. The National Islamic Front (NIF) continued to campaign along the line of Islamism and many top Darfur people were won as members though later defected to SLM. The defection of the Darfur people from Islamist Movement to other camps made the government of Khartoum to mobilize Arab tribal warriors against them. This led to propaganda by the Sudanese government, the use of Islamist nationalism. The Islamist ideology is based on a dogmatic interpretation of Islam, and the assumption that the Islamist Leaders are representation of God on earth. The Islamist state is considered a holy project, which holds an absolute truth. Within this framework, any opposition against the state was understood as an opposition to God Himself. And since the Islamist leaders were considered to represent God, they were further considered to have monopoly on virtues and holiness. The goal of maintaining the Islamist state justifies all means, including killing civilians and the burning of children. The Islamist leaders never questioned the justness of these tactics which is pure propaganda. Actually, their Islamist ideology does not require questioning the methods used by the regime: as the Islamist leaders believe they represent God, they themselves become the barometer of justice. But, by putting themselves in God's place, they actually destroy God as a point of moral orientation. The Islamists' ideology thus undermines the very God it claims to represent, and thereby eliminates the moral boundaries of its political action. Kirk (2011) noted that in the south and in the



Nubia Mountains, the Sudanese government has justified her action in the form of crimes against humanity by qualifying the victims, who were mainly Christians, as infidels (kafir). From the Islamists' point of view, this validates the use of extreme means to destroy them, in the context of a Holy War (jihad). But in Darfur, where the vast majority of the population was Muslim, things were more complicated. A mechanism needed to be developed, according to which the people of Darfur could be classified as evil, justifying their destruction. Capitalizing on the Salafist roots of its ideology, the regime managed to develop a powerful narrative that categorized Darfur people as infidels by connecting them to Judaism. The Salafist interpretation of Islam represents the Jew as the anti-thesis of Islam that constitutes an absolute evil. This interpretation hinged on a few verses in Koran that described the war between prophet Mohamed and the Jews in Medina in the 7th century. According to these Koran verses, violence against Jews was justified during the war in Medina, but the Salafist interpretation ignored the historical context in which the verses were written. Instead, Salafism held these verses as universally applicable, legitimizing the use of violence against Jews at any time. The everlasting Israelis-Palestinian conflict has further amplified the Salafist discourse. In addition, it has enabled Salafists to make a connection between the Jews and the West, emphasizing Western support to Israel. As a result, the West, Israel, Judaism and Christianity are all classified as evil according to the Salafist interpretation of Islam.

The Sudanese regime took the Salafist discourse one step further and managed to categorize Muslims who collaborate with the Jews or the West as non-Muslims, thus essentially reducing them to infidels. Depicting Darfur people as non-Muslims started by emphasizing that the Fur, Zaghawa and Massalit tribes were not Arab. The above form of propaganda is nothing but name-calling. Yet this was not enough to legitimize their destruction. Through thoroughly planned propaganda by the state-media, the regime claimed that the Darfur people were receiving support from Israel and the West. The Zaghawa tribe was even portrayed as having Jewish origins. These forms of accusations convinced people to see the Darfur tribes as non-Muslim, and therefore evil. This turned the Darfur tribes into a legitimate target for brutal attacks, which led to their killing in the name of God. This is frustration-scapegoat form of propaganda.

Propaganda of disinformation

The government of Sudan embarks on the propaganda of disinformation technique by giving untrue information to the rebels and the Darfur people. On the 9th of February, 2004, President Bashir announced an end to military operations and hostilities in Darfur, claiming that the government had recaptured all rebel territory and had full control over the region. His statement also included for the first time a formal crisis resolution package. In an apparent bid to pre-empt any push for a wider mediation process, the government said it would guarantee unimpeded humanitarian access and safe return of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, a pledge it has not fulfilled. He rather called for a conference within Sudan which the citizens who rebelled would be invited in order to comprehensively redress all grievances in the region, and pledged to implement its decisions. It also offered a one month amnesty for rebel fighters to hand over weapons, and established a National committee to focus on reconciliation, peaceful coexistence and the restoration of the social fabric in Darfur, (Al Bashir, 2004). Later, the government of Sudan announced that it would not attend a humanitarian dialogue with the SLA, JEM and the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SFDA), on the pretext that it had not been invited and that the talks, organized by the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue had become too politicized. It also launched a diplomatic offensive to persuade interested international parties that while a limited outside role might be acceptable, Darfur issues could be best handled through a domestic political process (ICG, 2004).

Sudan claims to be more of Arab than African

The government of Khartoum receives support from the Arab World because Sudan claims to be more of Arab than African. The Arab World jumped on the bandwagon to defend Al-Bashir's actions on Darfur; meanwhile the people of Darfur are suffering the harsh effects of the Khartoum government's brutal campaign on them. According to Michelle (2009) both the Arab governments and the Arab Public were outraged at the news that the international criminal court was to bring formal charges of war crimes against the Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir. The outrage that the Arabs expressed in this right was far louder than any anger they expressed at the death of more than 300,000 Sudanese, the displacement of more than two million refugees and the rape of thousands of women in Darfur should note the notable Arab media defense of Al-Bashir have been commensurate with the Arab



media's defense of the victims of Darfur? In order to convince the public that we are victims of the West's monopoly on international opinion, we must first show them that we side with the victims of those who were killed. In spite of the testimonies and documented evidence with regard to the systematic rape of women in Darfur, Al-Bashir has found many defenders who do not even refrain from accusing the victims of lying. Al-Bashir called on the Arab world to support him to condemn the international criminal court charges against him. This is bandwagon technique of propaganda which the Arab world embraced regardless of the daily loss of lives by the people of Darfur even the Moslem Darfur.

The North-South Sudan crisis and the claims of the number of death toll uses as propaganda

The rebels especially the SLA and JEM capitalized on the crisis between the North-South Sudan to gain support both from the Darfur and the international community. This is yet another form of glittering generality technique of propaganda. The fact looks so glaring that whatever happens in the case of southern Sudan was also supposed to happen to Darfur. The Khartoum government claimed that the international community, humanitarian organization and foreign journalist were only over blowing the number of either death by violence, displaced or refugees, rather the number was far below their estimate. Sudanese authorities claimed a death toll of roughly 19,500 while nongovernmental organization such as coalition for international justice, claim that over 400,000 people have been killed in the Darfur crisis. The entire interest groups, world community and reporters could not have been exaggerating while the government of Sudan was right. This is denial type of propaganda which the Khartoum Government used to gain the support of the Sudanese population especially the Arab Sudanese, the International bodies, and also to reduce tension among the Darfur people.

Denial of actual relationship with the Janjaweed

The government had continued to deny the actual relationship she has with the Janjaweed. The Darfur commission focused on considerable attention on the precise relationship between the Janjaweed and the Sudanese government. The government of Sudan gave the Darfur Commission conflicting reports about its relationship with the Janjaweed, asserting that the Janjaweed were merely an independent group of bandits, acting without relationship with the government. This however was contradicted by evidence showing that the government has been providing arms and funding to

the Janjaweed, and in some cases even ordered the Janjaweed to attack civilians. Victims and witnesses testified to the Darfur commission that the Janjaweed acted in consent with and through the support of regular government armed forces including receiving arms support from them. This is yet another denial technique of propaganda intended to demoralize the Darfur people. Without full support from the government, the Janjaweed militias could not have been able to override the SLA, JEM and other local opposition in Darfur. They would not have been able to muster the financial muscle to purchase both land and air weapons with which they used to outsmart the rebels.

Forceful expulsion of the African ethnic groups from their homes

The government of Sudan also embarked on forceful expulsion of the mainly African ethnic groups from their homes in a deliberate sequence and systematic way. According to a briefing paper on the Darfur crisis by the office of UN President and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan, the mechanism used to cleanse the area of non-Arab was by total disengagement from administration and suspension of all government services including suspending most government functions, non-payment of salaries to some ethnic government workers and abandoning basic government services such as healthcare and law enforcement. According to the UN report, once government officials leave these communities, these areas are then accused of being rebel sympathizers and they are targeted by government supported militia, the Janjaweed who would then burn villages, loot the properties of the non-Arabs, abduct children, rape women and prevent people from returning to their homes. The above is selection type of propaganda, where the government of Sudan selected some reasons to convince the world community that the Darfur people are bad therefore they must be wiped out from the surface of the earth.

Playing down on the magnitude of the crisis in Darfur

The Sudanese government continued to play down on the magnitude of the crisis in Darfur by giving the international community the impression that what is happening in Darfur is not as journalist are portraying it. The Khartoum government stated that those with their own agenda are trying to give a very sad view of what is happening and that the propaganda in the West is trying to exaggerate what is taking place in Darfur (UN office: 2003). This is over simplification type of propaganda technique by



the Sudanese government by giving favourable simple answers to complex problems on the magnitude of the crisis in Darfur. The government wants international community to believe that the crisis in Darfur is a simple one probably to be handled with kid gloves.

Another form of oversimplification propaganda embarked upon by the Khartoum government was her remaining defiantly indifferent to the international community's calls to stop the violence in Darfur. The 7000 African Union (AU) peacekeepers deployed to Darfur proved too small and ill equipped to prevent much of the mayhem perpetuated by the Janjaweed. The Khartoum government does not subscribe to increase of the number of the peace keepers in Sudan. The Sudanese government agreed to allow the modest AU force to remain in the country until the end of 2006, but rejected a hybrid of AU-UN peace keeping force entering the country. This is yet another form of propaganda technique referred to as obtains disapproval. This was mainly to persuade the international community audience to disapprove of the actions of the AU-UN to enlarge their hybrid peace keepers in Darfur. The Darfur crisis characterized by massive killing has been code named severally by different authorities mainly to gain the support of allies and to demoralize the enemies. Prunier (2006) noted that several reasons have been advanced to explain the massive killing in Darfur. He stated that a systematic state based intent to eradicate is not present but he believes that violence reached genocidal proportion which cannot be characterized in precisely the same way as that of Rwanda in the mid 1990s. Events in Darfur constitute an ambiguous genocide. Dubinsky (2005) asserted that the systematic, long-term planning of what variously has been termed ethnic cleansing or genocide in Darfur does not seem to have taken place. Anon (2004) stated that if this is a genocide, it doesn't look very much like those we have known before, instead, it is shadowy, informal, the killings take place offstage, it is the destruction of a people in a place where it is virtually impossible to distinguish incompetence from conspiracy is that by design or just more evidence of a governments utter haplessness. The above were nothing but oversimplification of what has been going on in Darfur. This is pure propaganda as the actions and statement will attract less interest from the international community and humanitarian agencies that would have liked to help to reduce the suffering of the Darfur people.

The Sudanese government accused Eritrea and the Sudan people's Liberation Movement/Army

from the south of providing support to the rebels. The government of Sudan also accused the founder of the N.IF, Hassan al-Turabi of having links with Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and that he provided both political and financial support to them. The Sudanese government further claimed that Turabi was behind an attempted coup and was arrested along with a number of other senior army officers. This was a frustration scapegoat technique of propaganda created to assign blame to someone else or group so as to distract attention from the need to end the crisis in Darfur. The Sudanese government took military action against the rebels with heavy weapons as well as invading or assaulting the Darfur civilians. This was mainly to be able to control the stronghold of the opponents – rebels. This was military action technique of propaganda which Sudanese government engaged in, so as to get the total control of the Darfur region in all ramifications. The government did not take into consideration the death toll and the effect of the military actions. The government made use of the Janjaweed by supporting them to unleash terror on the villages of the Darfur people where a lot of criminality was perpetrated against the civilian. According to the office of UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan (2004), the Arab militias engaged in what United Nations officials described as ethnic cleansing of the African ethnic groups of Darfur. The Sudanese government deployed the Popular Defense Force (PDF) and the Janjaweed under the direction of regular government forces who repeatedly unleashed a campaign of terror against civilians (Office of the UNHCHR 2007).

The languages of Al Bashir and some of his executives

The languages of Al Bashir and some of his executives were propaganda intended to give bad names to the rebels and the entire Darfur tribes. This name calling was targeted against the Darfur so as to gain the support of the other tribes and possibly the international community. It has also been to demoralize the Darfur populace. In a 31 December 2003 televised speech to the nation, President Al-Bashir claimed that part of a tribe was responsible for the insurgency that has been going on in Darfur. The reference was obviously to the Zaghawa, whom the government was seeking to isolate from the land of Fur, the Massalit and the Maidoub. The Governor of the Northern River Nile State, Abdalla Ali Masar, a Rezeigat Arab referred to the SLA members as armed robbers that have to be fought. These were languages that have been provocative intended to gain support of allies and demoralize the enemies.



These provocative languages were not limited to the Sudanese government rather other actors have also been involved in the use of provocative languages. For example, the Brussels based think tank, International Crisis Group, (2004) wrote that the situation mirrors the dynamic of other conflicts throughout Sudan, pitting a periphery that views itself as the victim of discrimination against a centre in Khartoum that is seen as holding all the economic and political cards. Ironically, progress in the peace talks between the government and the country's main insurgency, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLA/M) provides the immediate trigger since the Darfur groups feared they would have little leverage after a North/South deal was concluded.

The United States of America through the Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Charles Snyder (2004) stated that the emergence of armed opposition in Darfur has profoundly shaken the Gos because it poses, in many respects, a greater than the activities of the SPLM in the south. The SPLM has never threatened the north militarily, it is a southern movement. Support for the JEM and SLM however, come from within the predominantly muslim population of Darfur, radical Muslim cleric Turabi who broke with the Al Bashir regime in 1999, has link to the JEM. However, over 50 percent of the Sudanese military is from the Darfur and that region is not far from Khartoum. A successful insurgency in Darfur would fuel potential insurgencies in other parts of the North. This I believe explains why the government of Sudan has adopted such brutal tactics in Darfur. The Gos is determined to defeat the JEM and SLM at any cost to the civilian population. According to Jentleson (2007), the government of Sudan said, one government document directed the regional commanders and security officers to ensure the execution of all directives from the president of the republic of Sudan to change the demography of Darfur and make it void of African tribes by killing, burning villages and farms, terrorizing people, confiscating property from members of African tribes and forcing them from Darfur. These were languages used as demonizing and stereotyping techniques of propaganda. On the other hand, some government officials described what is going on in Darfur as genocide. Power (2008) ,noted that another brutal cleansing was underway in the world as in other nations and at other times, thousands again were being killed under conditions which violate human rights and international community accepted standards of human decency.

Former US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, used the term genocide in the testimony to the Senate

Foreign Affairs Committee based on his site assessment of the Darfur situation in 2004. His successor, Condoleezza Rice, also used the term based on her on site inspection in 2005. The U.S. labeling the Darfur crisis as genocide was bandwagon and glittering generality type of propaganda technique which automatically changed the interpretations and responses from other world community and humanitarian agencies. The UN does not agree that what was going on in Darfur was qualified to be described as genocide. Moore Head (2005) remarked that the UN Emissary Anthonio Cassese acting for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan did not deem the term genocide appropriate in his site report. This is over simplification of the situation in Darfur to discourage those who were interested in helping the suffering Darfur people as a result of the crisis.

In March 2007, the UN mission accused Sudan's government of orchestrating and taking part in gross violations in Darfur and called for urgent international action to protect civilians there. The UN Security Council approved Resolution 1706 which called for a new 26,000 troop of UN peacekeeping force called UNAMID to supplement a poorly funded and ill-equipped 7000 troop of African Union mission in Sudan peacekeeping force. Sudan strongly objected to the resolution and said that it would see the UN forces in the region as foreign invaders. This gross contempt was propaganda which Sudanese government used in soliciting the support of the Arab world and other countries such as China. This is bandwagon technique of propaganda calling on friends and allies to support her because she is being treated badly by the UN.

On the 14 July 2008, prosecutors at the International Criminal court (ICC), filed ten charges of war crimes against Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir, three counts of genocide, five of the crime were against humanity and two of murder. The ICC's prosecutors claimed that Al-Bashir masterminded and implemented a plan to destroy in substantial part, three tribal groups in Darfur because of their ethnicity. The ICC's prosecutor for Darfur, Luis Moreno-Ocampo asked a panel of ICC judges to issue an arrest warrant for Al-Bashir (Walker, 2008), which has drawn widespread criticism and analysis. Al-Bashir is capitalizing on this to call for support from the International community especially the Arab world and Moslem community. This is another bandwagon technique of propaganda. According to Walker (2008), it is suspected that Al-Bashir would not face trial in The Hague anytime soon as Sudan rejects the ICC's jurisdiction. Reuters (2008) noted that Bashir has rejected the charges and said whoever



has visited Darfur, met officials, and discovered that ethnicities and tribes will know that all of these things are lies. The above is nothing but propaganda language targeted to win the support of the friends of Sudan. Another propaganda language was from Payam Akhavan, a professor of international law at McGill University in Montreal and a former war crimes prosecutor, opined thus, although Al-Bashir may not go to trial, he will effectively be in prison within the Sudan itself, and Al-Bashir now is not going to be able to leave the Sudan without facing arrest (CBC News: 2008). All these were nothing but propaganda, because it hindered the efforts to establish peace in Darfur and further undermined efforts to boost stability in Sudan. In another form of propaganda in the Darfur crisis, some analysts thought that the ICC is guilty of exaggeration and hypocrisy with the indictment because after all those responsible for the old crisis in Iraq and Afghanistan have not been prosecuted. (Sudanese media centre, 2008). The indictment showed a clear glittering technique of propaganda as most Arab and African communities condemned it because they saw it as politically motivated and an attempt to blackmail Sudan so as to gain access to interfere in her internal affairs, while others expressed resentment towards what they call double standards on Sudan. They felt that ICC should have dealt or handled the previous world crisis such as Israel's occupation of Palestine territories first before concentrating on very recent events. They further view the indictments as an attempt to overthrow the Sudanese president. The Sudanese government alleged that the indictment was a ploy by the colonial powers to dominate and re-colonize Sudan. They demanded that the ICC should suspend the indictment against Sudanese President. All these are nothing but propaganda with different intentions mostly to gain the support of allies and demoralize the power of the enemies.

Further more, while addressing Darfur leaders on the 7th of August 2010, President Al-Bashir used the following propaganda language, any aid group or UN or AU agency, even UNAMID, their mandate is to support government authorities. I tell my brothers, the governments of Darfur that anyone who exceeds these boundaries or their mandate can be expelled the same day. No one has the right to prevent the government from doing its job to protect civilians. The camps in Darfur are Sudanese territory under Sudanese authority and there is no authority and there is no authority in this world that can stop the government from prosecuting criminals who break the law. (Reuters: 2010). The above statements reflect regime policy and it is nothing but propaganda intended to demoralize the aid workers

and the IDPS on various camps of Darfur. Not only is Khartoum government denying both aid organizations and UNAMID access to critical locations, it is expressing an increasingly hostile attitude towards both peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. In July 2010, Khartoum announced that it would monitor all travels by UNAMID personnel by searching all their bags at airports in Darfur. A senior information ministry official, Rabie Abdelati accused UNAMID in July 2010 of harbouring instigators of the fights and said the force must in future inform the government of all travel plans. In addition to the above the governor of South Darfur told UNAMID they should either do their job in Kalina refugee camp or get out and let the government take over and that UNAMID staff will have their bags searched at the airport and they will have to inform the government before moving on roads even within South Darfur's capital Nyala, (Reuters: 2010). The above were mainly propaganda targeted to demoralize the aid workers and peacekeepers.

The government of Sudan further embarked on propaganda by censoring reports on what has been going on in Darfur especially the various IDPS Camps. Reporters have been expelled at one time or the other from Sudan so as to prevent actual reporting of what is going on in Darfur. According to Reeves (2010) the humanitarian expulsions combined with access restrictions have created information vacuum about the security and human rights situations in Darfur. According to UN Sudan information Gateway (2010), Data and reports no longer appear or appear only sporadically and incompletely, the UN's Darfur humanitarian profiles no longer appear at all and such reports as do appear are not timely. UN agencies, which should be more open in revealing the conditions of Darfur IDPS and distressed rural populations, are generally silent. All these were propaganda targeted to demoralize the Darfur populations and the aid workers, while the suffering Darfur people continue to die of hunger, disease and lack of medication.

Propaganda in the Darfur crisis may not be limited to the Khartoum government, the militias and the rebels but the West and China also embarked on propaganda in the crisis. The Khartoum government stated that the propaganda in the West tried to exaggerate what took place in Darfur. Evra (2010), noted that though it might be correct to say that the West led by the USA has through a combination of propaganda technique exaggerated the crime committed by the Sudanese government in Darfur, whereas the government of Sudan has also in turn developed her own strategies in gaining for support for her actions in Darfur region. China has



maintained diplomatic relationship with Sudan over the years. Top on the list of the reasons for China's presence in Sudan and in Darfur is oil exploration. Therefore the major interest of China in Sudan is the Sudanese oil and other minerals. This explains why China has always supported the government of Sudan so as to protect her economic interest (Khalifa, 2006). Petrochina Company, Ltd has expanded its petroleum holdings in Sudan exploring natural gas resources in the Western Region and Darfur. China's role in Sudan is seen as dominant in no small part because it is the world's second largest consumer of crude oil. On average 14,000 new cars hit the road in China each day, and additional 52,000 miles of high ways will be laid in that nation in the immediate future. (O'Grady, 2007). China's state owned company (CNPC) controls between 60 and 70 percent of Sudan's total oil production. Additionally, it owns the largest single share (40%) of Sudan's national oil company, Greater Nile Petroleum Company. (Williams, J. and Farrow M, 2007).

China's relationship with Sudan

China's propaganda is a combination of different techniques rather than a single technique aiming to achieve the objectives of any of the following; to gain unflinchable support of their home populace, to urge more nations to support the Sudanese government in their policy against Darfur or create neutrality among the nations. The major channels of propaganda as exhibited by China were the Chinese State Controlled News Agency called Xinhua. In fact, the major instrument of the Chinese propaganda campaign in Darfur is mainly diplomatic efforts at home and abroad, a prodigious stream of news reports that deliberately distort or patiently misrepresent China's role in the Darfur crisis (Reeves, 2006). The spokesman for China propaganda is the special envoy for Sudan, Liu Guijin. China's position on the Darfur crisis as a member of the UN Security Council is expressed through various statements by Liu.

The UN passed resolution 1769 of 2007 approving the deployment of a hybrid of troops from the Africa Union and the UN (UNAMID) to Darfur for peace keeping operations. This was refused by the Sudanese government because she considered the UN proposed roster of troop, engineering and civilian police from contributing countries from Sweden, Norway, Thailand and Nepal as non African in nature. Khartoum insisted that she welcome only troops that are predominately and exclusively African in character. This action of Khartoum attracted serious criticism and condemnation from various leaders across the globe but it was rather

seen as a normal action by China. While others saw the action as political, China viewed it from a technical point, arguing that the deployment of the UN authorized UNAMID force is being held up by merely technical problems. The China spokesman and special envoy for Sudan, Liu declared that of course, there are still some technical problems with the deployment of the peacekeepers, but what China thinks is that we cannot politicize the technical problems (Associated Press, 2008). The above position statement of China was seriously at variance with the opinions of other nations over Khartoum's action. This rather continued to aggravate the crisis. According to Eric (2008), this is not only a highly misleading characterization of the obstacles to UNAMID deployment, but an exceedingly dangerous one, absolving Khartoum of responsibility for having made what is by all accounts precisely a political decision to obstruct the UN/AU force. This was the explicit conclusion of the British ambassador to the UN John Sawyer, following a briefing of the Security Council by head of UN peacekeeping, Jean – Marie Guehenno on January 8, 2008). Eric further remarked that there is nothing technical and everything rather is political in Khartoum's refusal to accept the UN proposed roster of troops to Darfur. The refusal is a complete reflection of political decision to deny UNAMID the personnel determined by UN to be essential for an effective mission in Darfur (Eric, 2008). China's position concerning the refusal of Khartoum to accept the troops of the UN-AU hybrid as authorized by the UN Security Council resolution by describing Khartoum's action as a mere technical problem revealed to a large extent the nature of Beijing diplomacy. China's action and position had encouraged Khartoum to remain adamant and continue to obstruct access to humanitarian bodies. The technical aspect of the issue which could be resolved with ease was the claim that there were lack of barracks, water supplies operation centers, bridges and other transportation infrastructure. Obviously, these facilities could not have been readily in place for the peace keeping operations, but it could be prepared as soon as they arrived. Khartoum was hiding under the excuse of technical problems rather her actions were purely political and propaganda in nature. China showed another propaganda in Darfur crisis when she expressed her opinion on the sanctions on Darfur. According to Lui statement that For China, we oppose sanction and embargoes because we think if others impose sanction and embargoes against a certain nation, the consequence would be the suffering of the people, sanction and embargo can't solve the problem (Associated Press, 2008).



The above was propaganda targeted to demoralise others who would want to support sanctions. China's actions was a propaganda that gave encouragement to Sudan that there will be no consequence, nor punitive actions that could emanate from the various sanctions either from the International Organizations or individual countries like U.S. and Britain. With this, Khartoum felt she had nothing to fear from either the UN Security Council or other world bodies. In propaganda behaviours by China, she remained silent about the nature or deplorable humanitarian situation in Darfur crisis. In the words of Reeves (2008), despite the horrible human realities in Darfur, reported by the United Nations as well as many of the world's most distinguished nongovernmental humanitarian organizations, China refused to speak honestly about these realities. Sometimes the representations were reminiscent of crude Maoist era propaganda. China's propaganda and position as reported by Xinhua (2008) stated that whenever a Chinese team comes to the tribe, the leader of the tribe Camps would go to collect water and food from door to door for their Chinese friend. Although the food was quite simple, sometimes, even hard to swallow, the Chinese workers always enjoyed it and spent many heartwarming nights in the village shanties. Sometimes, the Chinese drilling team felt quite sorry when they found that a well with clean drinking water could never be found in some villages (Associated Press, 2008). This was propaganda trying to give impression that the Chinese visited the Darfur villages and found out that all is well. The true action of the humanitarian situation in Darfur was not mentioned in the above official statement. The statement did not mention the facts that so many water sources in Darfur have been destroyed or poisoned with human and animal corpse.

In another Chinese propaganda in Darfur crisis, China government openly defended Khartoum action on the humanitarian conditions in Darfur. In the words of Liu, the official spokesman to China in Darfur that the Sudanese government is also devoted to improving the humanitarian situation in Darfur and has been trying the best to facilitate humanitarian assistance by international aid groups. (Associated Press, 2008) In reaction to China's position, Reeves (2008) noted thus, this absurd proposition has the advantage of being an assertion by Al Bashir not Liu himself, but without any correction, it stands as an assertion that Liu credits and yet as has been repeatedly reported by the most senior UN humanitarian officials. China said nothing to correct the impression of Bashir and his minister rather, to divert their attention to frivolous issues. This was

propaganda to discourage other world powers from coming to the aid of the suffering Darfur people. Chinese government presented different views about the facts and of the humanitarian situation in Darfur. Reeves (2008) remarked that even on matters of simple facts about the humanitarian efforts in Darfur, the Chinese were particularly inaccurate or do not want to accept the figures released by other organizations in Darfur. Xinhua (2008) reports that currently, there are over 17,000 volunteers including 2,000 foreign and more than 200 international aid groups in Darfur to provide assistance according to Bashir, President of Sudan (Associated Press, 2008). The above was Khartoum's position of the humanitarian situation in Darfur which was accepted by China. The UN Darfur humanitarian profile No 29 reported that there were 13,330 humanitarian staffs in Darfur with 890 expatriate workers. The profile also reported that 14 UN Organization, and 75 non – governmental organizations not 200 international aids groups as claimed by Khartoum. China acceptance of the figure presented by Khartoum as the humanitarian aid operators in Darfur also means that she accepted the number of dead persons since the beginning of the crisis up till 2008. The figure of 9000 deaths was far from being the actual figure of the number of deaths both from violence and health related issues. It was expected that China would challenge this figure rather than accept and support it as channeled and presented by Sudan.

Khartoum continued to enjoy support from China over her non compliance to the various resolutions passed on her by the UN Security Council. China has not at any time mentioned or reacted to the various well documented violations of international law, including massive crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide issues. Rather, China continued to threaten to use her veto power in support of Sudan. Reeves (2008) noted, that while continually threatening to Veto Security Council Resolution pertaining to Darfur and flaunting its power as Veto-wielding permanent member, Beijing feels no obligation to encourage Khartoum to abide by the demands or terms of resolutions that have come into effect. Another area of China's propaganda in Darfur was the supplies of military weapons to Sudan for continued destruction of civilian lives in Darfur. Amnesty International (2004), noted that throughout the massacre in Darfur in 2004, the military trucks, the helicopter and other ammunitions used by the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed were predominantly imported from China While Sudan continued to violate the various resolutions passed on her for her activities on human



rights, China did not make comments on such open contempt for the resolutions. China did not also mention or make condemnation of the bombing of Darfur. In the words of Reeves (2008), China has made no mention of these authoritatively reported aerial military assaults on civilians targets, assaults that violate not only the terms of UN Security Council resolutions but explicit provisions of international humanitarian law. The above positions of China towards the Darfur crisis were all propaganda mainly to win the support of Khartoum government and other neutral nations across the world. This had not only escalated but protracted the Darfur crisis leaving it with no visible signs of ending.

II. Conclusion

The paper examined propaganda in the Darfur region of Sudan crisis. The paper looked at the meaning of propaganda as defined by different authors. The paper relied on secondary source of information and anchored on communication theory as its framework of analysis. The paper observed that the various actors in the Darfur crisis engaged in the use of propaganda as an instrument of war. The paper revealed that categorization of citizens, religion, unusual languages, expulsion of African ethnic groups, disinformation, Sudan's denials of relationship with the rebels and China's relationship with Sudan were the factors used to carry out propaganda in the crisis. The paper believed that the massive use of propaganda was responsible for the none abatement of the crisis. The paper therefore recommends the following

- 1 The various actors in the Darfur crisis should restrain in the use of propaganda that is beclouding the crisis. Cutting down the use of crisis in Darfur will help in finding solution to end the crisis.
- 2 The management of the Darfur crisis should not be left in the hands of those who do not wish the crisis to end as they are only interested in prolonging the crisis through the use of propaganda.
- 3 The international community should summon up enough political will in finding solution to the reduction of massive use of propaganda which will lead to the abatement of the crisis.
- 4 Advocacy from activists on how to end the Darfur crisis should be encouraged rather than encouraging propaganda which escalates the crisis.

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