

Publication

Why Darfur? The Responsibility to Protect as a Rallying Cry for Transnational Advocacy Groups

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This article explores the role of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in the international response to the conflict in Darfur. Both scholars and activists have commonly described the R2P in Darfur as a failure. However, a second look reveals a relatively far-reaching response to a contemporary civil war: Darfur hosts the world's largest UN peacekeeping mission; it represents the first situation that the UN Security Council has referred to the International Criminal Court; sanctions have been imposed against Sudan; and significant resources were invested in peace negotiations. This article thus explores the puzzle of Darfur. It first establishes empirical facts by providing a detailed account of international engagement in Darfur. It then considers four conceptions of the R2P in the context of Darfur, arguing that the R2P as a 'rallying cry' for transnational advocacy groups provides the most plausible explanation for the magnitude of the international response. The third section of the article thus explores the mechanisms through which the transnational campaign on Darfur has built leverage. It concludes by considering the implications of the Darfur case on the R2P as a global norm and by pointing to some of its more problematic aspects.

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