Objectives
Students will learn about recent events in the country of Sudan and efforts to prevent another genocide; learn about the role of human rights organizations in calling the attention of the world to human rights abuses; explore the legal implications of use of the term "genocide"; appreciate the role of humanitarian organizations and government aid in trying to relieve the misery of those caught up in Sudan's war; learn about efforts to bring to justice those accused of genocide.

Background, Activities and Extension

Subject: World History, Government, Geography, Social Studies

Background: A civil war in Sudan for the past 20 years has led to the death of 2 million people. However recent events have pointed to what some are calling genocide and there are estimates of 2.2 million at risk of dying in the near future due to inadequate humanitarian relief. The international community has condemned the Sudanese government for setting up obstacles to established relief efforts. Despite a recent cease-fire agreement signed between the government and rebel opposition groups, fighting continues.

Introduction

This lesson is organized around gaining an understanding of the current situation in Darfur, Sudan. It is recommended that the entire class take part in this first portion together (1). Groups could then be set up to explore other aspects of this conflict, research the Web sites indicated and report back to the class in a general sharing (2) to (3). Discussion or research questions have been included for each additional section.

What's happening in the Sudan?

Read the following story and interview explaining efforts to avert this growing crisis:

World Recognizes Refugee Crisis in Sudan  
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec04/Sudan_7-05.html

Crisis in Sudan  
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/Africa/jan-june04/Sudan_6-24.html

Guiding questions:

- How has the civil war affected the lives of the Sudanese?
- Why is the area of Darfur of recent concern?
- What hope is offered by the visit of Colin Powell and Kofi Annan to this region?
Activities

The crisis in more detail

Independently or as small groups, research the Web sites of the following agencies involved in monitoring events in this area. Take notes on what you discover and consider the following topics in detail:

Class discussion or topics to research:

• What has been the cause of the civil war in the Sudan?
• What have been the conditions outlined in the cease-fire agreement and peace process?
• What evidence has been presented for the charges of genocide being made?

Amnesty International: Sudan Crisis
http://web.amnesty.org/pages/sdn-index-eng

Doctors Without Borders: Emergency in Darfur, Sudan: No Relief in Sight

Human Rights Watch: Sudan: Darfur Destroyed
http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/darfur/

Human Rights Watch: Too Little, Too Late: Sudanese Aid International Response 2004

United Nations: Annan stresses urgency of resolving crisis in Darfur, Sudan

http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/9ca65951ee22658ec125663300408599/5a6ba25bff4d33dfc1256e
c100490def?OpenDocument

Is this genocide? Why is the terminology significant?

As you’ve read, over the past several years efforts have been under way to broker a cease-fire and peace agreement among the various factions in this war. Others, who have been observing the fighting that has been going on, have identified the deliberate actions taking place as indications of genocide. They cite these actions as indicators of the "intent to destroy" definition found in the Genocide Convention [see entry below], and urge the international community to take action.

Parties to the genocide convention are obligated, under the terms of the convention, to prevent genocide when proof is presented, i.e. to mount a humanitarian intervention. This can include the taking of military action.

Genocide Convention Article 2

In the present convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.


For additional information see:

Prevent Genocide International: Information on the Genocide Convention
http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/convention/

Prevent Genocide International: U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Action Plan to Prevent Genocide

U.S. Institute for Peace: The Genocide Convention at 50
http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr990107.html

In your groups, using the definition and information about genocide above and the information you researched in part 2, come up with evidence as to whether you think genocide has occurred in Sudan. Present that evidence to the rest of the class.

Decide as a class: Should the United Nations declare that a state of genocide is occurring in Sudan and mount an increased humanitarian intervention to prevent further loss of life? What kind of action plan would you recommend if it is or is not a genocide? How should the United States be involved? Create a specific action plan for Sudan.

Extension Activities
What about those responsible?

The issue of impunity, not punishing those responsible for war crimes and genocidal acts, is of ongoing concern. Research the progress made with regard to these efforts for acts of genocide committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. How might the International Criminal Court be of use in this situation? Look at the Web sites below for more information.

Rwanda
Working in parallel with a Rwandan justice system that has prosecuted many people who committed acts of genocide, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has handed down landmark verdicts, which send a message to those who may be contemplating genocide in other countries. It was the first international court to convict anyone for this crime; the first court of any kind to hold a former head of government responsible for genocide; the first to determine that rape was used as an act of genocide; and the first to find that journalists who incite the population to genocide are themselves guilty of that crime.

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
http://www.ictr.org/

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
http://www.un.org/icty/

Class discussion: What measures might be taken against those considered responsible for the acts of genocide occurring in Sudan?