Darfur Under Pressure

Trace the causes and consequences of conflict

GHW.7.2 "Analyze the physical and human factors involved in conflicts and violence related to nationalist, racial, ethnic, religious, economic, political, and/or resource issues in various parts of the world, over time..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two physical conditions and circle two human decisions or actions in the passage. Write 1 beside a consequence for people and 2 beside a consequence for the environment.

Land, Power, and Conflict in Darfur

1 In western Sudan, Darfur's dry climate makes farmland and grazing land valuable. During the late twentieth century, drought and population growth increased pressure on land and water in parts of the region. Farmers and herders sometimes disagreed over where animals could travel and graze. These disputes did not make war unavoidable. Darfur also faced unequal political power: many residents said Sudan's central government neglected their communities. In 2003, rebel groups attacked government targets, saying they sought fairer treatment. The government responded by supporting armed militias, widely called Janjaweed, which attacked villages, especially those of non-Arab communities.

2 Land mattered, but the fighting was not simply a fight over scarce water. Militias used ethnic identity to choose whom to attack, while government support gave them weapons and power. Raids killed civilians and forced families to leave farms and homes. Some fled across the border into Chad; others entered crowded camps within Sudan. Leaving a village meant losing access to fields, wells, and grazing routes, which made it harder to grow food or keep animals. In a dry landscape, safe water became especially difficult to find when thousands of displaced people gathered in one place.

3 A peace agreement in 2020 did not end all violence in Darfur. When fighting between Sudan's army and the Rapid Support Forces spread in 2023, Darfur again saw attacks on civilians, including attacks based on ethnic identity. The Rapid Support Forces grew out of earlier government-backed militias. Conflict over decades has damaged livelihoods as well as lives: abandoned fields may produce less food, and people in some displacement camps have cut nearby trees for cooking fuel. That loss of tree cover can strain the local environment. These outcomes show how political decisions and physical conditions shape both violence and its aftermath.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did a physical condition and a political issue both contribute to conflict in Darfur?

2. Why does the passage say the fighting was not simply a fight over scarce water?

3. How did raids on villages make it harder for displaced families to meet basic needs?

4. What connection does the passage show between the violence that began in 2003 and the fighting that spread in 2023?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence advisory note to a humanitarian team working in Darfur. Explain how a physical condition and a human decision can contribute to violence, predict one consequence for people and one for the environment, and recommend an action that could reduce a consequence.

ANSWER KEY

Darfur Under Pressure

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two physical conditions and circle two human decisions or actions in the passage. Write 1 beside a consequence for people and 2 beside a consequence for the environment. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did a physical condition and a political issue both contribute to conflict in Darfur?	**Drought increased pressure on land and water, while residents' complaints of neglect by the central government led rebel groups to attack government targets.**
2	Why does the passage say the fighting was not simply a fight over scarce water?	**Militias used ethnic identity to choose whom to attack, and government support gave them weapons and power.**
3	How did raids on villages make it harder for displaced families to meet basic needs?	**Families lost access to fields, wells, and grazing routes, making it harder to grow food, keep animals, and find safe water.**
4	What connection does the passage show between the violence that began in 2003 and the fighting that spread in 2023?	**The Rapid Support Forces involved in the 2023 fighting grew out of earlier government-backed militias, and civilians again faced attacks.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Darfur's dry conditions increase pressure on land, but the decision to arm militias turns tensions into violence. Families fleeing raids may lose access to fields and wells, leaving them without reliable food or water. In crowded camps, cutting nearby trees for cooking fuel could reduce local woodland. A humanitarian team could provide fuel-efficient stoves so families need to cut fewer trees. The team should ask displaced residents where to distribute the stoves so people can reach them safely.

Accept other passage-supported links between physical conditions, human actions, and consequences. The advisory note should propose a plausible action of the student's own, not merely repeat a passage detail.