

A Roundtrip Mission from Saudi Arabia to Sudan to Protect Humanity amidst the War: A Public Relations Perspective



Saud A. Alsulaiman

Department Mass Communication, King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The United Nations (UN) reported that the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in Sudan has led to a severe humanitarian crisis in the Middle East. The clash between the two groups in mid-April 2023 resulted in a significant loss of life and the displacement of thousands of people. The war damaged the country's infrastructure, including roads, airports, and medical facilities, and caused shortages in food supplies, water, fuel, and medicine (UN, 2023, 2024). Various news media extensively covered the political crisis as people from different nationalities tried to flee the country (Elbagir et al., 2023). The UN and several countries urgently called to cease the war as the situation was swiftly exacerbated (UN, 2023, 2024). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), in particular, was one of the first countries that made public diplomacy and remarkable efforts to provide assistance and evacuate people stranded amid the conflict (Goodwin et al., 2023; Abueish, 2023; Ebrahim, 2023).

This case study, therefore, sheds light on Saudi Arabia's efforts to mitigate Sudan's conflict from a public relations perspective. In particular, and through content analysis, it attempted to investigate and analyze the communication campaign efforts, media coverage of Saudi's efforts, perceptions of politicians and governments worldwide, and how these efforts may have contributed positively to Saudi Arabia's reputation. Scholars have defined reputation as stakeholders' perceptions of a particular organization (Gibson et al., 2006; Eccles et al., 2007). According to Helm (2011), an organization's reputation is formed based on stakeholders' perceptions of an organization's ethical and moral principles. In this context, this case study showed how the Saudi roles amid the Sudan conflict have positively and profoundly impacted stakeholders, including the media. Such investigation may trigger policymakers and public relations practitioners who manage communication strategies and execute communication activities to use best public relations practices, especially during crises.

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