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The Translator

Review by James Urquhart
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The Translator: A Tribesman's Memoir of Darfur

By Daoud Hari
 Penguin £8.99, 240 pages
FT Bookshop price: £7.19

Darfur's indigenous African Zaghawa pastoralists coexisted with nomadic Arabs in southern Sudan for centuries until, in the early 1990s, General Bashir's regime organised the nomads into heavily armed "Janjaweed" militias that massacred non-Arab villages, killing millions. Daoud Hari returned to his village just as Sudanese helicopter gunships and Janjaweed soldiers reduced it to a corpse-strewn smoking ruin. Fluent in Zaghawa, Arabic and English, Hari finds his "fate" in Chad's refugee camps, translating horrific accounts for UN investigations into possible crimes of genocide. Flashes of humour only accentuate the courage and hardship of Hari's mission. "Nothing is all bad," he reflects, with staggering optimism. His reportage of rape, bloodlust and politically driven, indiscriminate slaughter should encourage a new audience to help challenge this ongoing crime against humanity, perhaps by visiting www.savedarfur.org.

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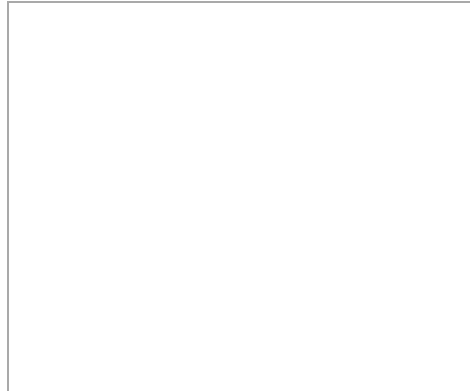
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