

UNAMID BULLETIN

UNAMID Celebrates International Day of Peacekeepers



On 29 May 2014, UNAMID celebrates Peacekeepers Day in El Fasher, North Darfur. As part of the ceremony, UNAMID Joint Special Representative Mohamed Ibn Chambas inspects the guard of honour. Photo by Kirk L. Kroeker, UNAMID.

On 29 May 2014, UNAMID peacekeepers celebrated the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers in El Fasher, North Darfur. Held under the theme “a force for peace, a force for change, and a force for the future,” the event was attended by UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas, North Darfur Deputy Governor Al Fatih Abdulaziz, along with military, police and civilian personnel from UNAMID and Government of Sudan officials.

The programme in El Fasher opened with a military and police parade; the lowering of the AU and UN flags; the observance of a minute of silence; and a wreath-laying ceremony to honour those peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the line of duty. In addition to the solemn commemoration services, the event included cultural performances by UNAMID personnel and songs sung by students from the Zain Al Abideen primary school.

UNAMID's Chief conveyed UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for the occasion, highlighting the history of UN peacekeeping since the establishment of the organ-

ization in 1948. “Looking to the future, we can be confident that as new challenges emerge, United Nations peacekeeping will evolve to meet them,” said the JSR, quoting Mr. Ban.

The Secretary-General's message commended military, police and civilian peacekeepers for their commitment to stabilising communities, protecting civilians, promoting rule of law and advancing hu-

man rights. It also expressed grief for those peacekeepers giving their lives while serving the cause of peace. “Last year, 106 peacekeepers perished carrying out their duty under the UN flag, bringing the total number of lives lost in the history of peacekeeping to more than 3,200,” said UNAMID's head. “We mourn the passing of every one of these courageous individuals.”

In reading out the Secretary-General's message, the JSR underscored the changing nature of peacekeeping. “United Nations peacekeeping is modernising to ensure that it can tackle tomorrow's peace and security challenges,” he said. “It is deploying new technologies such as unarmed, unmanned aerial vehicles, refining its practices to better protect civilians, and boosting the representation of women among its ranks while strengthening its partnerships with regional organizations.”

Addressing the gathering, Deputy Governor Abdulaziz praised UNAMID's efforts to help bring peace to Darfur. “We commend the men and women who have sacrificed to contribute to peace,” he said. “Peace is the ultimate goal; it is only through peace that the world can enjoy a better, more secure life.”

A total of 58 peacekeepers have lost their lives due to hostile action in Darfur since the inception of the Mission in December 2007. Similar Peacekeepers Day celebrations took place in other Darfur's states. ■

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Darfur Dialogue Committee Officially Formed in El Fasher

The Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation (DIDC) Implementation Committee formed on 26 May 2014 in a ceremony hosted by UNAMID in El Fasher, North Darfur. The DIDC mechanism, stipulated in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), is designed to consolidate peace in Darfur, promote confidence-building and encourage reconciliation and unity. The DIDC is facilitated by the African Union, the State of Qatar and UNAMID.

The Implementation Committee is set up to be the governing and implementing arm of the DIDC process to ensure its full ownership by Darfuris. It is an independent body con-

sisting of various representatives of the DDPD parties, civil society, youth and women's groups, academia, business, and internally displaced populations. The Committee Chair and two Deputies of the Committee are Saddig Adam Abdallah (Saddig Wada'a), Muhamed Ahmed Haroon and Suad Adam Albarjo.

The Committee is expected not only to ensure all appropriate preparations in overseeing and conducting the dialogues and consultations across Darfur, but also to guarantee thorough documentation and analysis the process and its outcomes. The Committee is tasked with ensuring that the process remains inclusive, transparent and credible at all times.

Apart from the members of the Implementation Committee, the event was attended by the Assistant to the President of Sudan, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour, an African Union representative, Ambassador Ibrahim Kamara, the Ambassador of Qatar, Rashid Abdel-Rahman Al-Neami, the Chair of Darfur Regional Authority, El-Tijani Seisi, and the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

"This event marks the beginning of a process that is an important part of our effort to build peace in Darfur, promote confidence-building, encourage reconciliation and unity between communities in

Darfur," said Mr. Chambas. "The DIDC process will address issues related to civic responsibility, democratic values, and enhancing time-tested traditional dispute resolution practices."

The JSR expressed hope that the DIDC process will become a crucial building block in the national dialogue. "The DIDC, properly conducted, should be a dress rehearsal for the Darfuris to participate effectively and articulate their concerns in the proposed national dialogue," UNAMID's Head added, noting that it is therefore imperative that conducive conditions exist for free expression of opinions without fear of harassment or intimidation throughout the process. ■

UNAMID Peacekeeper Killed, Three Injured in North Darfur

A UNAMID peacekeeper was killed and three others were injured on the morning of 24 May 2014 in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, while attending a mediation meeting between two disputing tribes.

Following altercations between Fur people from Al Salam village and Arab militia from Al Hara village, a UNAMID team attended mediation meeting in an attempt to ease the tension. The Arab militia elements, nevertheless, became hostile toward UNAMID peacekeepers and started shooting at them, at

which point the peacekeepers returned fire.

As a result of the ensuing fighting, four Rwandan peacekeepers were injured and one of them died from his wounds. The other three, one of them in critical condition, are receiving treatment at the UNAMID hospital in Kabkabiya. The fighting left an unconfirmed number of casualties among the assailants.

UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas said he is deeply saddened by the

outcome of the attack and the death and injuries caused. "I condemn this heinous criminal act in the strongest possible terms," he said. "Our peacekeepers were trying to mediate the dispute in good faith and, regrettably, their efforts went unappreciated. They paid the ultimate price with courage and dedication while discharging their noble duty, trying to bring peace to Darfur."

The JSR called on the Government of Sudan to act decisively and swiftly in bringing the perpetrators to justice. "This

crime is utterly unjustifiable and amounts to a crime against humanity for which those responsible must be brought to account," he stressed.

Mr. Chambas extended his and the Mission's deepest condolences to the family and friends of the late peacekeeper, and to the Government and people of Rwanda.

This sad incident brings the number of peacekeepers losing their lives in hostile action in Darfur to 58 since the inception of the Mission in December 2007. ■

JSR Asks International Community Not to Forget Darfur

UNAMID Joint Special Representative Mohamed Ibn Chambas visited Brussels on 20-21 May 2014 to meet with European Union (EU) officials and ask them not to forget the Darfur crisis.

In a lecture delivered at Friedrich-Ebert Foundation on 20 May, the JSR explained that Darfur appears to be on a new cycle of violence. "Civilians have been direct targets of violence, leading many to draw parallels between today's conflict dynamics and

the armed conflict in 2003," he said. "While we should approach this comparison with caution, similarities do exist."

Mr. Chambas noted that the structural issues that drove the 2003 conflict remained unresolved and traditional resolution mechanisms have been weakened. He mentioned that economic downturn has pushed poverty and criminality up, and that competition over land, water and mineral resources is getting more violent. "A new wave

of displacements and deliberate emptying of certain areas are suspected by communities to be well underway," he said.

"If the international community fails to grasp this pattern, create much-wider awareness, put pressure on parties to the conflict to negotiate, and help in any way it can to halt the spiral into renewed violence, the impact could be widespread and more debilitating," the JSR warned.

The Head of UNAMID highlighted that the crisis in Dar-

fur is deepening at a time when the attention of the international community is shifting to other equally pressing conflicts worldwide. "Without prejudice to other countries needing support, it is my appeal before the international community to not let go of Darfur," he said, requesting the international community to continue supporting a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Darfur and funding the humanitarian actors to mitigate the effects of conflict in the region. ■