

UNAMID BULLETIN

UNAMID Chief Updates Media on Darfur Situation



On 11 August 2014, UNAMID Joint Special Representative Mohammed Ibn Chambas addressed members of the media in a Khartoum press conference designed to offer an update about his recent consultations with the Security Council in New York, where he briefed Council members regarding the current situation in Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

On 11 August 2014, UNAMID Joint Special Representative Mohammed Ibn Chambas addressed members of the media in a Khartoum press conference designed to offer an update about his recent consultations with the Security Council in New York, where he briefed Council members regarding the current situation in Darfur. The JSR described the increase in tribal conflicts, the humanitarian situation on the ground and UNAMID's technical, logistics and programmatic support to Government institutions and civil society groups.

During the press conference, Mr. Chambas outlined the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) progress, which included the formal launching of the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation (DIDC) mechanism and the formation of a 17-member Implementation Committee to lead the process. In addition, he detailed the release by the State of Qatar of US\$10 million out of the pledged US\$88 million to finance the Darfur Development Strategy's projects, and

highlighted the additional steps taken toward the verification and integration of Liberation and Justice Movement and Justice and Equality Movement (Sudan) combatants under the DDPD security arrangements.

The UNAMID Chief highlighted his efforts as Joint Chief Mediator and also indicated that the Mission's work has been refocused around three strategic priorities defined by the Security Council: protection of civilians; facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and mediation between the Government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the DDPD, while taking into account ongoing democratic transformation at the national level and necessary support for the mediation of communities in conflict.

The UNAMID Head said that the members of the Security Council were supportive of UNAMID's efforts to assist in the implementation of the DDPD and stressed the importance for the parties to fulfill their commitments if the

DDPD and its supporting structures are to have a lasting impact. Mr. Chambas noted that violence and acts of criminality have made it difficult for UNAMID peacekeepers to carry out their mission and have posed a threat to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

Some 385,000 people have been displaced by the conflict since the beginning of 2014, according to statistics from the UN Country Team and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "The plight of these internally displaced people is compounded by the reduced presence of humanitarian actors and the reduction of humanitarian assistance on the ground as a result of capacity gaps, funding shortfalls and the fragile security environment," he said.

However, despite these challenges, humanitarian access has improved, Mr. Chambas said. According to OCHA, there were 51 attempts in July to reach various affected areas in Darfur. Of these, the authorities declined only two humanitarian access requests in East

Darfur. During the past three months, there were 21 access denials for UNAMID in comparison to 72 in the previous quarter. Recalling his trip to New York, Mr. Chambas said that the Security Council noted with concern the upsurge in inter-communal conflict and urged UNAMID to continue with its robust protection strategy.

Finally, Mr. Chambas said he has intensified coordination with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General to Sudan and South Sudan, as called for by both the African Union Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council. A proposed meeting, he said, would involve the representatives of the armed groups and the Government of Sudan. "This meeting is expected to explore ways of addressing the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur; deliberate on how the parties can bridge their differences; and make progress toward a comprehensive settlement of the Darfur conflict," he said.

UNAMID has embarked on a comprehensive set of reforms set out in Security Council resolution 2148 (2014), which requires a re-evaluation of the Mission's structure. "We are looking forward to the renewal of the Mission's mandate, so that a more efficient and agile UNAMID is able to better serve and support the people of Darfur in their pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity," Mr. Chambas added.

He concluded by expressing his belief that the proposed national dialogue is an initiative that deserves support and engagement by all Sudanese and the international community. ■

Mission Leaders Welcome Movement's Commitment to End Use of Child Soldiers

The UNAMID leadership welcomed the new steps taken by the Sudan Liberation Army / Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) to prohibit the recruitment and use of child soldiers in its ranks.

The movement previously issued a command decree to adhere to international norms and standards protecting children and the Sudan Child Act of 2010, and on 6 August 2014 outlined a formal operational mechanism that establishes an implementation committee not

only to raise awareness about the movement's prohibition of child soldiers but also to work with relevant organisations to reintegrate child soldiers into society.

This step comes after the command order was issued by SLA/MM leader Minni Minawi on 17 December 2013 following his participation in a workshop on peace and security in Darfur held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and co-organized by the AU-UN Joint Mediation Support Team and the Intergovern-

mental Authority on Development.

"This is a significant development that contributes to UNAMID and Sudanese concerted efforts to eradicate the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Darfur and could encourage a rapprochement toward peace," said UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative, *a.i.*, Abidoun Bashua. "We call on all parties to the conflict and appeal to all communities across Darfur to refrain from using children as combatants, as the

protection of children is one of the foundations for lasting peace in every society."

Since 2009, six parties to the conflict in Darfur established action plans to end recruitment and use of child soldiers, and nine have issued command orders prohibiting the practice. Meanwhile, more than 1,200 former child soldiers have benefitted from reintegration programs with the support of Sudan's Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission, UNICEF and UNAMID. ■

Mission Supports Education in West Darfur

On 5 August 2014, UNAMID officially inaugurated three new classrooms at the Al Riyadh Primary School in El Geneina, West Darfur. The project, designed to improve the school facilities and provide a conducive learning environment, was undertaken as part of the Mission's Quick

Impact Projects (QIPs) programme and implemented by UNAMID's Police component in collaboration with the local nongovernmental organization Islamic Relief Agency.

Speaking during the hand-over ceremony, a UNAMID representative reiterated the Mission's willingness to sup-

port such activities designed to improve education infrastructure all across Darfur.

The Headmaster of the school, Mr. Khaeel Abdulmaleek, expressed appreciation for the Mission's support, and added that more schools being constructed signifies fewer young people resorting to criminal

behaviour, the creation of a healthy society and progress on the road toward sustainable peace and stability in Darfur.

The event was attended by UNAMID officials, local government representatives, native administration leaders and members of women's associations. ■

UNAMID Takes Preventive Measures Against Ebola

UNAMID personnel have been monitoring the Ebola outbreak since its onset in early 2014 and are coordinating prevention measures with the lead United Nations agency on the matter, the World Health Organization (WHO), and with other international bodies.

WHO, so far, has not imposed restrictions on travel to and from the countries where cases of Ebola have been recorded, as the disease is not airborne. WHO identified

three groups that are at risk of contracting the disease: individuals having had close contact or consumed infected animals or their raw flesh; healthcare workers, such as doctors and nurses; and people who are in close constant contact with visibly ill patients.

Conscious of the Mission's responsibility toward its staff and the population it serves in Sudan and the Darfur region, UNAMID's Medical Section has put in place a

strict set of measures to mitigate risks related to Ebola. As such, in a three-stage verification process, all UNAMID personnel travelling to and from West Africa must undergo medical procedures with UN-certified medical staff prior to their departure to West Africa, prior to their return to the Mission and upon their return to the Mission. There are no recorded cases of Ebola among UNAMID's personnel.

UNAMID issues regular guidance to its staff on prevention and precautions to avoid contracting Ebola. Also, the Mission monitors the global situation of the spread of Ebola; follows the guidelines from WHO and regularly updates this guidance to staff; and reviews and amends the measures that are in place in line with international standards for countering the epidemic. ■