

UNAMID BULLETIN

UNAMID Head Urges Darfur Dialogue, Hostility Cessation



On 26 March 2014, displaced people are pictured inside UNAMID's base in Khor Abeche, South Darfur. In anticipation of an attack on their homes, about 3,000 IDPs sought refuge inside the UNAMID base. The Mission is providing protection, shelter and water to the IDPs, and is working with the humanitarian community to provide additional emergency support. Photo by Mubarak Bako, UNAMID.

To move the peace process forward, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas was invited by Chad President Idris Deby to attend the Um Jaras Forum. The gathering of Zaghawa leaders, attended by Sudan Vice President Hassabo Mohamed Abdul Rahman and held on 26 March 2014, was designed to build consensus for Darfuri armed movements to join the peace process.

At the forum, the JSR emphasized the need for all parties in Darfur to commit to dialogue without preconditions and to resolve differences through political not military means. "There is imperative need to recognize that

after 10 years of fighting and attendant bloodshed in Darfur, nobody has emerged victorious," he said. "The lesson from this is very clear and simple—parties have to unconditionally find each other across the negotiating table and talk, and reach agreements."

Dr. Chambas said that the suspension of hostilities is essential and that mere promises to talk cannot inspire confidence if, at the same time, fighting continues and intensifies. "The ongoing attacks on civilian villages and camps for internally displaced people, alleged to be carried out by the Rapid Support Forces, are a matter of concern and are an ugly blemish on our efforts

to dialogue; regardless of who is ultimately responsible for this violence, it must now stop," he said, adding that the recent spate of violence has displaced some 200,000 civilians in Darfur in the past month alone.

"Also, the military attacks of the rebel movements must stop; they have proven incapable of defeating Sudan Armed Forces and only increase the suffering of the people of Darfur," he continued. "Similarly, we must do all within our means to end the inter-tribal clashes, which caused a displacement of more than 400,000 people in 2013 and continue to be a source of death and destruction this year."

The Head of UNAMID high-

lighted the need to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations. "Darfur has been experiencing one of the worst man-made humanitarian crises in the world," he said. "Without enabling the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the multitudes of Darfuris who need it, our sincerity to finding a durable solution to the conflict is bound to flounder."

Dr. Chambas mentioned that it is imperative to support and promote Darfur's participation in the national dialogue announced by President Bashir in January 2014. "The political gain of the DDPD [the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur] should feed into the national dialogue process and, in turn, a successful national dialogue process should also create an enabling environment to implement the positive aspects of the DDPD and, in particular, the Darfur Development Strategy, with total national consensus and support."

The following day, in a related joint statement, UNAMID Deputy JSR Joseph Mutaboba and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan Ali Al-Za'tari expressed concern at the violence affecting civilians and the constraints on the international community to help those affected. The statement called attention to the restrictions the UN and the humanitarian community face in helping civilians affected by the conflict. ■

Situation Stabilizing in Saraf Omra, Following Clashes

The situation in Saraf Omar, North Darfur, has stabilized and the majority of the displaced communities have returned to their homes after the signing of a cessation-of-hostilities agreement between the feuding communities. The displacement was a result of tribal clashes that erupted in Saraf Omra on 7 March.

According to humanitarian agencies, an estimated 60,000 people were displaced from Saraf Omra and neighbouring

villages. Many sought refuge in the vicinity of UNAMID's base at Saraf Omra, while others moved to villages in Central and West Darfur. The United Nations family responded with humanitarian assistance and the deployment of additional peacekeepers to protect civilians. UNAMID provided water and medical assistance, and supported local medical personnel in setting up and operating a temporary clinic.

On 12 March, a reconciliation agreement was signed

between the Abbala and Gimir tribes at UNAMID's base in Saraf Omra. The signing ceremony was attended by 50 members from each community and UNAMID officials serving as mediators. The same day, assistance to the displaced communities increased with the distribution of food by the World Food Programme.

UNAMID continues to work with the established reconciliation committee to monitor the implementation of the

signed peace agreement. The committee has requested additional assistance in the form of water, the rehabilitation of the local hospital and the continuation of enhanced security patrols in and around the town and surrounding villages. The committee requested the provision of non-food items for the newly displaced people who lost their homes. UNAMID is continuing to work closely with the humanitarian partners to provide the requested aid. ■

World Water Day: Darfur Still Faces Shortages



On 25 March 2014 in Mellit, North Darfur, a UNAMID truck provides potable water to internally displaced people. Photo by Albert Gonzalez Farran, UNAMID.

As water shortages in camps for displaced people have become a harsh reality of life in Darfur, long queues of women and children at water points have become a frequent feature of this region's stark landscape. Given the pressure from rapid demographic growth and the large population concentrations occurring in Darfur's towns and camps for displaced people, acquiring even a bare minimum amount of water

has become a challenge. In this context, effective management of the resource becomes critical.

Darfur is largely arid, and demand for water in the region has dramatically increased in recent years. Reasons for this can be traced to the growth of urban areas coupled with the pressure of droughts. While the region has a brief rainy season, usually from June to October each year, a serious decline in the water table

has occurred near urban centres and camps for displaced people, making access to water a source of conflict between communities.

UNAMID and UN agencies have been working with local partners and relevant institutions to increase access to, and improve the management of, such water resources for all local communities. Recently, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) launched the Wadi El Ku project in a catchment west of El Fasher. The project, designed to help the communities in the area save and use water more efficiently, is expected to help an estimated 90,000 people and, later, to be scaled up and replicated in other parts of Darfur.

"Water is a key driver of economic and social development along with its primary function in maintaining the integrity of the natural environment," says Ms. Magda Nassef, a UNEP representative. "However, water is only one of many vital natural resources and it is imperative that water issues are not considered in isolation."

For its part, UNAMID has been conducting a programme to drill wells to provide water to communities across Darfur. "So far, boreholes have been drilled

in Tulus, El Sereif and Nertiti in Central Darfur," says Mr. Emmanuel Mollel, Chief of UNAMID's Water and Environmental Protection section. "Also, engineers serving with the Mission have drilled boreholes in Um Kadada and in Habilla, North Darfur."

In addition, Mr. Mollel explains, UNAMID-contracted partners have completed a borehole in Shangil Tobaya and are currently drilling in Tawila and Um Kadada, North Darfur. "UNAMID has rehabilitated three dams in South Darfur and is in the process of constructing one hafir [a water reservoir] in Mukjar, West Darfur," he notes.

World Water Day, celebrated annually on 22 March, this year focused on promoting the theme "Water and Energy." The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon highlighted in his message for this year's World Water Day the importance of water and energy in eradicating poverty and pointed out that water and energy interact with each other in ways that can help—or hinder—efforts to build stable societies: "On World Water Day, let us pledge to develop the policies needed to ensure that sustainable water and energy are secured for the many and not just the few." ■



Bekhela, East Darfur

On 25 March 2014, as part of its work to support local communities, UNAMID presented mattresses, pillows and blankets to the Bekhela Health Centre. The centre, located some 75 kilometres south of El Daein, serves the nomadic tribes in the area. In addition to providing basic items, such as beds and blankets, the Mission installed 26 troughs and taps at the Bekhela's community water point, the only source of safe drinking water in the area. The water point serves more than 15,000 inhabitants of Bekhela and the surrounding villages. Photo by Abdulrasheed Yakubu, UNAMID.