

UNAMID BULLETIN

UNAMID Head Briefs UN Security Council on 'Alarming Escalation of Violence' in Darfur

On 3 April 2014, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas briefed members of the United Nations Security Council on what he described as “alarming escalation of violence” in Darfur during the past three months, resulting in more than 215,000 civilians being displaced.

The JSR explained that there are several factors at play. Of particular concern are the activities in the region of a Government counter-insurgency force known as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The RSF has perpetrated attacks on communities, particularly in South Darfur, he noted, with several villages looted and destroyed, and their populations displaced with an as yet unknown number of casualties.

Mr. Chambas also noted that there has been an increase in attacks by non-signatory movements on villages and against Government forces. He highlighted that inter-communal fighting,

mainly over access to natural resources, had increased along with criminal activities, causing an increase in suffering for the civilian populations in Darfur.

The Head of UNAMID expressed concern about access restrictions enforced by all the parties to the conflict and the insecurity continuing to hamper the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations. Mr. Chambas emphasized that the current security situation in Darfur is serious and has the potential to undermine ongoing efforts to seek a political settlement of the conflict.

“A cessation of hostilities is a first and vital step toward constructive dialogue, and I sincerely hope that the modalities of the initiative for an all-inclusive national dialogue by the Government of Sudan will materialize soon and complement our efforts to bring about durable peace, security and development in Darfur,” he said. ■



On 3 April 2014 at United Nations headquarters in New York, UNAMID JSR Mohamed Ibn Chambas speaks to journalists following a Security Council meeting at which a resolution was passed revising the strategic priorities at UNAMID. Photo by Paulo Filgueiras, UN Photo.

UNAMID Protects Newly Displaced in North and South Darfur



On 7 April 2014 in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, UNAMID engineers work on the construction of a community centre for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are currently living inside the UNAMID base in Khor Abeche. The community centre, one of two, is located inside a secure 70,000 square metre area that, when completed, will have watch towers, solar lights and latrines. Photo by Albert Gonzalez Farran, UNAMID.

UNAMID has been protecting the new internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have gathered near the Mission's base in Mellit, North Darfur, and is assisting the

humanitarian community in delivering aid to them. Since 1 April 2014, more than 2,000 people, mostly women and children, arrived at UNAMID's base in Mellit.

These IDPs, who had come from Bowa and other villages located roughly 50 kilometres northeast of Mellit, reported that their villages were attacked at the end of March by armed groups suspected to be members of the Rapid Support Forces and militia elements. They reported that the attackers killed people, stole livestock and burnt their homes. The displaced people also reported that on their way to Mellit, they saw other villages, including Hadi, Sani Haya and Wadibour, already burnt.

UNAMID peacekeepers are protecting the newly displaced and providing them with water and medical assistance. On 6 April, an inter-agency team visited Mellit to assess the situation and provided some 1,000 kilograms of

humanitarian items, such as plastic sheets, sleeping mats, water bladders, chlorine tablets, soap and high-energy biscuits for children, to assist the IDPs.

Meanwhile, in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, some 3,000 IDPs continue to take refuge inside the UNAMID compound, where they have received food and other aid from the humanitarian community. UNAMID peacekeepers continue to provide them with potable water and healthcare services.

A team of UNAMID engineers are working to construct a secure area beside the Mission's base for the IDPs. When completed, the IDPs will have a secure perimeter, watch towers, solar lights, two community centres and latrines. ■

Radio Show Produced by Darfuri Children Officially Launches



On 15 April 2014, the first Darfuri radio programme made by children, for children, officially launched. The *Voices of Children* show, produced by six children from El Fasher and the Zam Zam and Abu Shouk camps for displaced people, is broadcast in a format designed to provide entertainment and information, and encourage the involvement of children in the peace process. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

On 15 April 2014 in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, officially launched *Voices of Children*, the first

Darfuri radio programme made by children, for children. The programme, produced by six children from El Fasher and the Zam Zam and Abu Shouk camps for dis-

placed people, is broadcast in a format designed to provide entertainment and information, and encourage the involvement of children in the peace process.

To support the young journalists in their work, UNAMID Radio established a scholarship help pay their annual school fees. Taj Alasafia, a 15-year-old secondary school student, says he enjoys his work in public-service broadcasting. "I am happy to be part of *Voices of Children*," says Taj, who recently won a national award for Best Radio Producer for his role in the programme. "I want to be heard on radio discussing issues of concern within the community."

Speaking at the launch event, the Minister of Social Affairs, Mr. Khalil Abdallah

Adam, expressed his appreciation for the programme and said that the Darfur conflict has had a negative impact, in particular, on children. "We have to inculcate the values of peaceful coexistence in our children so that they, in turn, become positive role models within their communities, thereby ensuring a brighter future for Darfur," he said.

Voices of Children, aired on Al Salaam Radio each week, is supported by UNAMID personnel, who provide the young journalists with studio equipment and office supplies, along with training in interviewing and editing. The programme is running in a pilot phase in El Fasher, North Darfur, and is expected eventually to expand to other Darfur states and possibly also across Sudan. ■

Averting the Risks of Unexploded Ordnance

Unexploded ordnance (UXO) continues to pose a threat to the safety and security of Darfur's communities. From 2013 to the present, according to UNAMID's records, 19 people have been injured and seven others killed as a result of UXO accidents. These unexploded remnants of conflict not only pose a direct risk to civilians, but indirectly pose a threat in obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid, hindering the return of refugees and internally displaced people, and preventing farmers from cultivating their land.

UNAMID's ODO personnel have been taking steps to clear large tracts of land in Darfur. From July 2013 to the present, ODO officers assessed more than 800 square kilometres of land and more than 3,000 kilometres of roadways, declaring them ordnance-free. In the process, they destroyed 865 UXOs and trained more than 16,000 people in how to recognize and mark them. UNAMID's ODO

personnel continue to work closely with other UNAMID components, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and Government institutions to help raise awareness about the issue and reduce the risk of injury from unexploded ordnance.

"Through the efforts of ODO and our partners, we have managed to reach some 800,000 people directly with important messages about explosive remnants of war, with an estimated 2.25 million others receiving indirect messaging," said Max Dyck, Programme Manager of UNAMID's ODO.

One example of the kind of risk-awareness education programmes undertaken in Darfur is the one conducted by Friends of Peace and Development (FPD), a Sudanese NGO. Mr. Yahya Ahmed, Director of FPD, explains that many UXO incidents occur in rural areas or on the outskirts of towns where children play or



On 25 March 2014 in Mellit, North Darfur, a UNAMID peacekeeper marks the location of an unexploded mortar projectile near the Alabassi camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The International Day of Mine Awareness is marked each year globally on 4 April. In Darfur, as a consequence of the ongoing conflict, unexploded ordnance presents a serious risk for civilians, especially children. Photo by Albert Gonzalez Farran, UNAMID.

graze their family's animals. FDP specifically targets rural areas—and the schools and camps for displaced people—with puppetry shows and workshops designed to build an understanding of the dangers of UXOs.

In addition to focusing on raising awareness about UXOs directly and through the assistance of its partners, UNAMID supports victims through an as-

sistance programme designed to fund the rehabilitation of those injured in UXO incidents. This programme is designed to ensure that the families affected by these incidents get the economic and social assistance they need.

The International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action is commemorated annually on 4 April. ■