

HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST

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UNAMID Head Visits GENEVA



Jeremiah Kingsley Mamabolo, Head of UNAMID.

***SINCE 2013**, the Human Rights Section has facilitated an annual working visit to Geneva by the UNAMID head of Mission. The purpose of these visits is primarily intended to provide the head of UNAMID the opportunity to hold meetings with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, interact with African Ambassadors accredited to Geneva and the humanitarian community. During his 2017 annual visit to Geneva, Jeremiah Kingsley Mamabolo, head of UNAMID, held extensive meetings and briefings on Darfur. In this report, he outlines the engagements he made and the various messages he delivered.*

From 24 to 25 April 2017, upon his invitation, I undertook consultations in Geneva with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the African Group of Ambassadors; the Humanitarian Donor Group; and other partners concerned with results and challenges encountered in the implementation of the human rights mandate of UNAMID and ways for further engagements consistent with international instruments. I was accompanied by Ms. Isha Dyfan, Chief of UNAMID Human Rights Section.

During my meeting with the High Commissioner, I took the opportunity to discuss the structure of the human rights section in UNAMID in the context of the exit strategy and a potential reconfiguration of the Mission. I informed the High Commissioner of the human rights violations and abuses still faced by the IDPs and the refugees, especially from South Sudan and Chad, who remain exposed to rape and sexual violence. I informed the High Commissioner of the fact that despite relative stability in Darfur there are still several incidents of harassment and arbitrary

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During my visit I met with the Sudanese Permanent Representative in Geneva. In this context, I informed the permanent representative of the impending visit of the High Commissioner to Sudan and the fact that UNAMID is very supportive of this initiative, given its potential to focus more attention on the state of human rights of the IDPs and refugees. Ambassador Ismail acknowledged the improved relations between UNAMID and the Government while underlining the fact that this Mission remains a test case for Africa's ability to take care of its own problems especially in the domain of peacekeeping. He repeated severally that Sudan does not consider UNAMID as a foreign force, but as group of friendly nations coming to the aid of his country. He promised to cooperate with the High Commissioner and any other human rights officials seeking visas to visit Sudan. My team and I sought to explain the texts and resolutions of the United Nations that give HRS a double function of reporting both to Geneva and New York, and why the section remains a crucial part of UN peacekeeping missions. We urged the permanent representative to draw attention to these texts within his government so that it can reconsider the decision of withholding visas for human rights officers.

As an important agenda of my visit to Geneva, I briefed the African Ambassadors Group, reiterating to them the fact that fundamental rights is at the heart of the work of UNAMID, cutting across all areas including the peace process, protection of civilians, as well as justice and reconciliation and in accordance with the framework of the UN Security Council Resolution. In this context, I brought to the attention of the African Ambassadors the fact that the DDPD provides that justice and reconciliation shall be based on principles, including respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law. To this end, I informed the Ambassadors that UNAMID is actively engaged in the monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation within its mandate and that alongside the protection work, the Mission is also engaged in building the capacity of diverse stakeholders—state and non-state actors—which is crucial for the reinforcement of respect for and promotion of human rights and the rule of law. This is in addition to the collaboration and technical support to key institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission, as well as the justice and reconciliation mechanisms under the DDPD. I informed

the Ambassadors that despite these efforts, human rights challenges continue – killings, displacements, sexual violence etc. triggered and exacerbated by the fighting including inter-communal conflict. However, I expressed the hope that efforts deployed by the Mission, in collaboration with its partners—GoS, local authorities, UNCT, AU, diplomatic community, would go a long way in ameliorating the situation.

I found the visit to Geneva a very useful way of keeping Darfur and the peace process therein on the political and humanitarian landscape and drawing attention to the human rights situation of the IDPS in particular and the Darfuris in general. My discussions with the partners explored the best mechanisms to achieve the objectives of UNAMID in this domain. The Chief of Human Rights has been following up on pledges of support from OHCHR and other partners for technical cooperation and funding to assist national institutions and civil society partners to promote and strengthen respect for human rights in Darfur. I was encouraged by the genuine expressions of support by the High Commissioner and all my interlocutors towards the people of Darfur and for the work of UNAMID especially in the areas related to human rights.

Letter from the Director's Desk



SINCE the launch of Human Rights First (UNAMID Human Rights Newsletter) in September 2013, the editorial team has ensured that the publications covered relevant human rights issues in the Darfur context as well as a broader human rights themes important to the work of the Mission. This fifth edition is no exception. As its main theme, the fifth edition focuses on women's rights and gender equality in the context of the conflict situation and the emerging transition environment in Darfur. The articles in this edition inform the readership on progress and challenges in promoting respect for women's rights through engagement with institutional partners and communities.

Unfortunately, the global women's rights Treaty—the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women—has not been ratified by Sudan, nor is Sudan a party to the African regional protocol on women's rights, also called the Maputo Protocol. As a result, work on the promotion and protection of women rights in the context of Darfur is largely guided by series of instruments such as the Bill of Rights enshrined in Sudan's Interim Constitution of 2005; the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Secu-

rity and its subsequent resolutions; the successive mandates of UNAMID as well as the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. These documents and frameworks provide a wide spectrum of possibilities to address the civil and political rights of women and girls as well as their economic, social and cultural rights.

Globally, States and local authorities have long embraced the notion of women's rights and gender equality. Over the years, international efforts and advocacy by the United Nations and partners had encouraged Sudan to accelerate women rights through legislative reform and policy changes. Initiatives undertaken by Sudan have resulted in some progress, key amongst which include the amendment of the criminal Procedure Act of 1991 related to sexual violence against women and girls. Similar progress has been made to enhance access to justice for women, empowerment of women through participation in electoral processes, labor rights for women, as well as increased enrolment of girls in schools pursuant to the Millennium Development Goals. However, attitudes towards women claiming their rights in Darfur is still immersed in cultural

sensitivities in the backdrop of restrictive elements of sharia law.

Successive UNAMID mandates since 2007 have routinely and specifically required the mission to protect civilians especially women and children from conflict-related sexual violence and sexual and gender-based violence using prevention and response strategies including accountability. While protection of women and girls from violence remain the immediate concern, empowerment of women and girls has been taking place concurrently through highlighting women's voices in the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation and local mediation processes as provided for in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

As Darfur looks forward to a cessation of hostilities agreement between the non-signatory armed movements and the Government, actors engaged in promoting women's rights and gender equality, led by the Sudanese civil society could be working towards a more meaningful and transformative agenda for women and girls in a stable Darfur, one that is rooted on the implementation of the recommendations in 2015 by the CESSCR, the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU' 2030 agenda.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Appointment of Acting Deputy Joint Special Representative



ON 10 DECEMBER 2017, Mr Peter Schumann joined UNAMID as Acting Deputy Joint Special Representative. Mr Schumann is a German national, who has over 35 years of experience across the UN system. He had previously

served as Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative, Senior Development Advisor and manager of complex development, peacebuilding and reconstruction programmes. Since his retirement from active service in 2007, Mr Schumann has been a consultant and trainer at the National Military Academy, the National Police Academy in Germany. Mr Schumann's arrival was preceded by the appointment of Ms Bintou Keita, the erstwhile Deputy Joint Special Representative, as the Assistant Secretary General at the Department for Peacekeeping Operations. **HRS**

Appointment of Force Commander



NEW YORK, 8 August 2017 - United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat today announced the appointment of Lieutenant General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi of Kenya as Force Commander for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Lieutenant General Ngondi has had a distin-

guished career with the Kenyan Defence Forces, spanning over thirty-nine years, including as Commander Kenya Army (2015-2016), General Officer Commanding Western Command and General Officer Commanding Eastern Command, Chief Instructor Defence Staff College, Brigade Commander and Commandant School of Infantry. Lieutenant General Ngondi has also served as Force Commander in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (2012) and Commanding Officer, Kenyan battalion (KENBATT) in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (2000) as well as the Kenyan contingent in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (1990). He holds a Bachelor's degree in Human and Social Studies from the University of South Africa. **HRS**

Publication of UNAMID-OHCHR Joint Public Report

GENEVA, 21 November 2017 – A report by the UN Human Rights Office and the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has called on the Sudanese Government to pursue effective, transparent and durable policies to enable the 2.6 million people internally displaced by the long-running conflict in Darfur to return home voluntarily or to reintegrate into host communities. The report notes that, despite a ceasefire between the Government and various armed opposition groups which has largely held since June 2016, violence against internally displaced people (IDPs) continues to be widespread and impunity for human rights violations persists. "I urge the Government to address fundamental issues that are preventing the return of displaced people, such as continued violence, including from armed militias, which raise continuing and justifiable fears for their safety and the lack of basic services that leave

them dependent on aid," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

The report details the situation of IDPs from January 2014 to December 2016, a period largely marked by the Government military campaign "decisive summer" that led to mass civilian displacement. With the unilateral ceasefires by the Government and most armed opposition movements in place since June 2016, there has been significantly less conflict-related displacement in Darfur during the first 10 months of 2017 than during the same period in previous years. The report says that while State governments, native administrations and traditional leaders have made considerable efforts to prevent and respond to such violence, the underlying causes of such conflict, remain unaddressed. The report calls on the Government to carry out a prompt and comprehensive disarmament of armed militias to create an enabling and safe environment for IDPs. **HRS**

Appointment of Mission Chief of Staff

ON 12 DECEMBER 2017, UNAMID announced the arrival of Mr Luke Mhlaba as the Mission's Chief of Staff. Mr Mhlaba has served the UN in various capacities for 25 years. Prior to joining UNAMID, Mr Mhlaba was the Principal Legal Officer at the Office of Legal Affairs at the UN Secretariat with responsibilities related to international peace and security. His other functions included staffing and budgetary issues. Mr Mhlaba began his UN career as a legal officer with

the UN Adhoc Tribunal in Cambodia in 1992. He subsequently served as legal officer in UNOSOM II (Somalia), UNMIH (Haiti) and UNIFIL (Lebanon). In March 1999, Mr Mhlaba joined the General Legal Division as senior legal advisor and later reassigned to the Office of the Legal Counsel in 2007. In his subsequent assignments, Mr Mhlaba served as senior legal officer with UNMIK (Kosovo), Chief of Staff in UNOCI (Ivory Coast) and as Chief Legal Officer with UNAMID. **HRS**

Protection of women against violence in Darfur



Women protection advisers at the biennial workshop on conflict related sexual violence in New York.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS are human rights. Women like men are entitled to the equal enjoyment of and protection of all human rights in the political, economic, cultural, civil social and all spheres of life. Women's rights should not be divided, suppressed or ignored by the law, but are to be protected and defended, more so in situations of conflict. Gender equality is one of the basic human rights whose achievement has enormous positive socio-economic ramifications to empower families and communities. Local customs, societal behavior and attitudes must cultivate and nurture rights allowing women and girls of all ages to enjoy the freedoms and entitlements due to them.

Sudan remains unfavorable to women's exercise of their total rights and freedoms. The country has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which commits countries to condemn violence against women, to create legal and social protection and is the international bill of rights for women, which spells out basic standards which must be attained to achieve gender equality. Sudan entered reservations, preferring the strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia law, which means that some of the women's international human rights are in

conflict with religious law. Women suffer gender inequalities which remain deeply entrenched in the nation's communities. In Darfur, the alarming situation of sexual violence and discrimination against women who constitute the majority of the victims stems from this context. Sexual violence which has deeply violated social values, humiliated women and girls in the majority, is an issue of major focus for monitoring and reporting for UNAMID and preceding missions since the conflict started in 2003.

The limited rights that Sudanese women enjoy are derived from the Interim National Constitution although practically it is a challenge for them to fully enjoy the rights and get the protection stated. Women are also protected through international law although the most vulnerable women who live in areas affected by conflict in Darfur least benefit from the envisaged protection.

Sporadic belligerent and inter-communal clashes, weak control of illegal small arms and light weapons contribute to exposure and vulnerability of civilians to violence. Conflict related sexual violence is prevalent around camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), areas of livelihoods and return villages. Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) seems

prevalent in domestic settings including isolated places.

Types of violations and crimes: harassment, rape, abduction for rape, sexual exposure and humiliation, rape and murder, attempted rape.

Victims: women and girls especially from the internally displaced communities, minor girls in domestic settings and to a lesser extend minor boys.

Perpetrators: often identified as armed men in civilian clothes, members of the armed forces, Arab proxy forces, Arab tribal militia, armed nomads, criminal gangs and men in unspecified military uniforms, civilian men and minor boys.

Judicial redress for violent crimes against women and girls remains inadequate throughout Darfur. There is absence of police and judicial infrastructure in many remote areas and localities including victim friendly spaces like women centers for victims of sexual violence and gender desks at most of Police Stations to deal with SGBV and CRSV related crimes. Protection for survivors of sexual violence against reprisals is lacking in an environment characterized by a general culture of impunity and stigmatizing of rape victims, hindering both reporting and accountability.

There is inadequate medical response and support to survivors of sexual violence in remote areas compounded by shortage of actors like medical professionals (with knowledge and skills), necessary medication, specialized equipment, and referral coordination. Psychosocial support is constrained due to absence of institutional psychosocial support services for victims and survivors. The challenge is compounded by access restrictions in terms of information sharing with the government law enforcement authorities, victims and among protection partners.

Actions anticipated and needed for prevention and response to sexual violence in Darfur.

Government leadership with political will, wielded with broad inclusive participation of national stakeholders, effective partnerships with the United Nations and other international partners, will strengthen the fight against sexual violence in Darfur.

Justice for victims of sexual violence is also critical for sustainable peace in Darfur while provision of remedies and compensation to the victims and survivors form part of the recovery process and justice delivery.

Responding to and assisting victims of sexual violence requires comprehensive service provision from all sectors (medical, psychosocial and legal) which must be ensured by State structures, with complimentary support from national stakeholders, international partners and the United Nations.

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1. SCR 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all peace and security efforts and calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.
2. SCR 1612 requested the immediate implementation of a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to keep under review six categories of grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict including sexual violence.
3. SCR 1674 reiterates the need to protect civilians in armed conflict.
4. SCR 1820 recognizes that sexual violence is a security issue and links prevention of sexual violence with reconciliation and durable peace.
5. SCR 1882 calls for specific Action Plans with armed groups who commit such acts of violence.
6. SCR 1888 strengthens the fight against impunity by building judicial expertise to respond to sexual violence in conflict.

Human rights Workshop on Harmful Traditional Practices



Ms Nazik Alamin Abakar, the coordinator of the State Child Welfare Committee making a presentation on existing government policies relating to harmful traditional practices in East Darfur.

OVER THE PAST DECADES, the United Nations and its partners had devoted considerable resources in highlighting, as well as advocating, for the transformation of traditional practices that have negative social, economic and health consequences for women. The practices range from female genital cutting to force and child marriages. In Darfur, like many societies where tradition is central to social life, practices do exist which are not only antithetical to the spirit of human rights, but also have the potential of forestalling the wellbeing and advancement of women and girls. Engagements and advocacy with state authorities in Darfur by UNAMID HRS have highlighted concerns over the prevalence of harmful traditional practices such as female genital cutting. While the focus of the advocacy has been on the need for action by state authorities, sensitization programs also continued to be organized in local communities and internally displaced persons' camps.

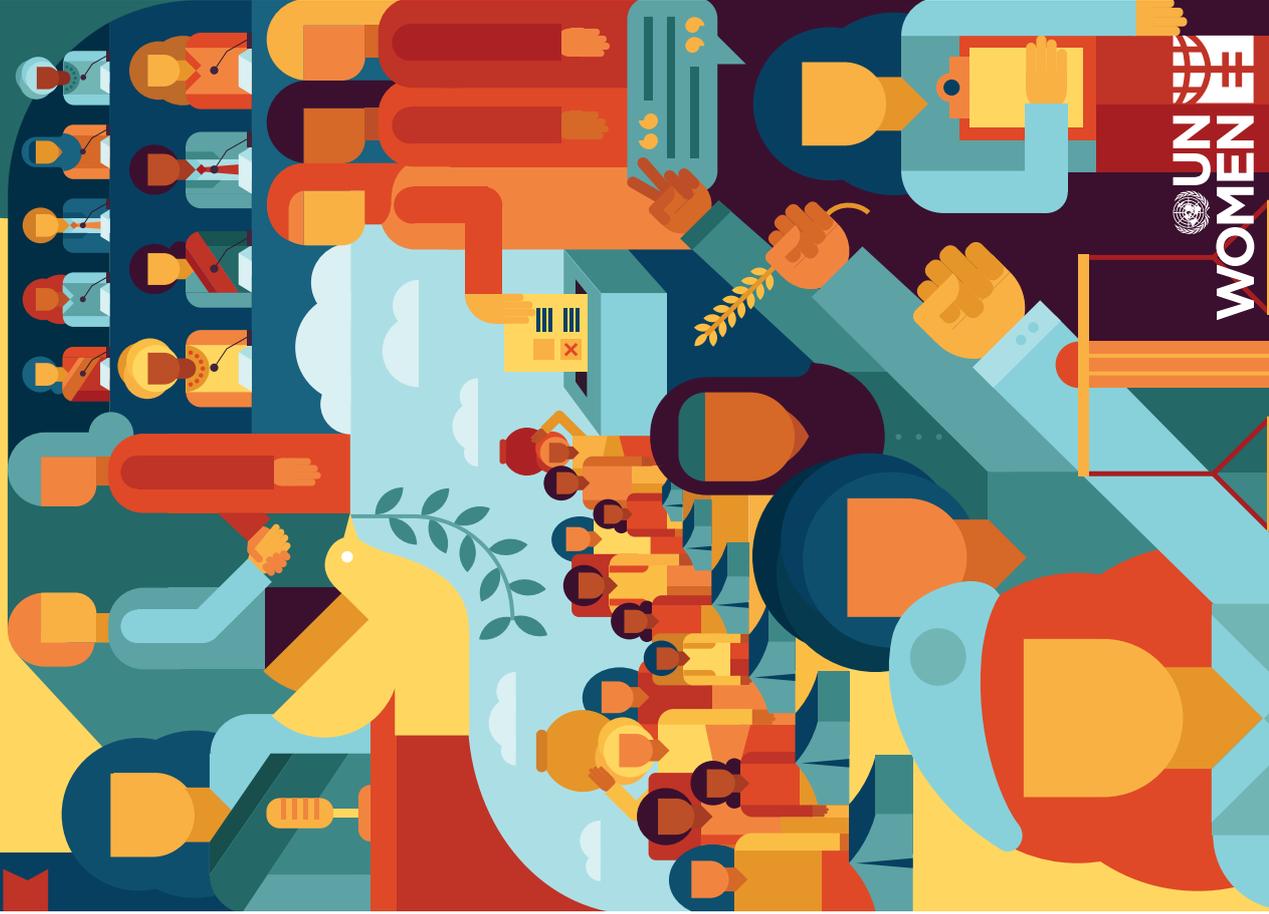
On 19 December 2017, upon the request of the Wali Adviser on Children and Women's Rights, UNAMID HRS organized a one-day workshop in El Daein, East Darfur, on harmful traditional practices. The workshop targeted 35 women leaders, who are known to have influential voices in and around El Daein. The workshop was aimed at enhancing the knowledge of the women leaders on the medical and human rights implications

of harmful traditional practices. Speaking at the workshop, the East Darfur minister of health, who represented the Wali, noted that social beliefs have impeded an honest conversation on the negative implications of harmful traditional practices. He pointed out several examples including child and forced marriages, which he explained, needed to be tackled. He added that according to statistics, 65% of women in East Darfur are affected by female genital cutting. He noted that this has had an impact on the health of women.

Presentations were also made on effective advocacy tools that could be utilized by the participants to change attitudes and perceptions on harmful traditional practices. The workshop was formally opened by Dr Hashim Al-Waguia, the East Darfur State Minister for Health, and attended by state officials including Ms Zitana Adam, the coordinator of the 1325 Committee as well as Mr Ibrahim Hamid Makein, the El Daein locality commissioner. Resource persons included Ms Nazik Alamin Abakar, the coordinator of the State Child Welfare Committee, Maulana Mohammad Saeed, the East Darfur State Judge of the Juvenile Court, as well as the Director of the East Darfur Institute for Midwives, who dilated on the medical implications of early marriages and female genital cutting.

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Security Council Resolutions: Women, Peace and Security



Women's Leadership in Peace Making and Conflict Prevention

YEAR
RESOLUTION

OVERVIEW

2000
1325
Affirms the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict peacebuilding and governance.

2009
1889
Stresses the need to strengthen implementation and establishes indicators for the monitoring of resolution 1325; calls for the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Security Council on women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding.

2013
2122
Addresses persistent gaps in implementing the WPS agenda; positions gender equality and women's empowerment as critical to international peace and security; recognizes the differential impact of all violations in conflict on women and girls, and calls for consistent application of WPS across the Security Council's work.

2015
2242
Establishes the Informal Experts Group (IEG); addresses persistent obstacles to implementation including financing and institutional reforms; focuses on greater integration of the agendas on WPS and counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism; calls for improved Security Council working methods on WPS.

Prevention of and Response to Conflict-related Sexual Violence

YEAR
RESOLUTION

OVERVIEW

2008
1820
Recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war and a matter of international peace and security that necessitates a security response.

2009
1888
Strengthens efforts to end sexual violence in conflict by establishing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and team of experts on rule of law and sexual violence in conflict, deploying expertise and improving coordination among stakeholders involved in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

2010
1960
Establishes a monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence in conflict.

2013
2106
Focuses on accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict; stresses women's political and economic empowerment.



Women participants at the Darfur “Peak” Conference held in South Darfur.

The Struggle for Women’s Rights in Darfur

THE IMPACT of the armed conflict on women in Darfur has been severe. Data has shown that 45 percent of households in Darfur are female-headed with a higher percentage of 65 – 70 in the internally displaced persons camps (IDP). Similarly, 65 percent of the agricultural labour force before active conflict was provided by women and they also engaged in subsistence farming to feed their households. The armed conflict which has seen the proliferation of small arms and the recruitment of many able men into militia groups have disrupted agricultural activity and thus impacted on women’s livelihoods. Women cannot sell their labour on a large scale nor engage in their “backyard gardening”/subsistence farms as before, but now engage in seasonal agricultural activities in their original homesteads or seek alternative livelihood options

in the IDP settlements such as fetching water and firewood.

Communities in Darfur have always had both temporary women-headed households and long-term women-headed households. Consultations suggest that up to 45 percent of households in Darfur are women-headed, compared to average of 28 percent women-headed households in other regions of Sudan. The conflict in Darfur has changed the family-head structure in IDP camps where about two-thirds of the households are headed by women. Significant proportion of women-headed households in Darfur is poor and vulnerable. The protracted conflict and displacement in Darfur have worsened socio-economic indicators and increase gender disparities by impeding livelihood opportunities and access to basic services. Poverty

and violence characterize the lives of women in Darfur, with many women having suffered harassment, rape and other forms of sexual abuse. The conflict has affected women differently to men. Disproportionate number of men have left their families – to fight, to escape being killed, or try to earn living outside family locations. Women have stayed to support their remaining family members comprising mainly of the old and children.

Life in the IDP camps has made women vulnerable to unacceptable levels of sexual and gender based violence. Women travel out of the camps for water and firewood and in the process get raped or abused by armed militia. Due to the breakdown of social services such as health, education, protection and justice sectors, the well-being of women and girls is fur-



“Wars are being fought on the bodies of women and girls. Motivated by political, military or economic aims, such as controlling territory, populations or resources, conflict-related sexual violence is frequently and deliberately used to target vulnerable populations, inflicting psychological trauma, humiliation, and displacement. Victim-blame, leading to social exclusion, is what gives the weapon of rape its uniquely destructive power. This includes the power to fracture families and shred the social fabric.”

- Pramila Patten,
Special Representative of the Secretary General on
Sexual Violence in Conflict.

ther compromised. Maternal mortality rates are high – 605/100,000 live births compared to the national average of 435/100,000 live births; school enrolment is low for girls and percentage of literacy levels for women aged 15 to 24 years is 32 percent compared to the national level of 45 percent. Similarly, access to justice is limited, with women having a low appreciation of their rights. For example 68 percent of Darfuri women between 15 to 45 years believe a husband is justified to beat his wife compared to the national average of 47 percent. There is widespread impunity for rape and gender based crimes as most perpetrators are not brought to justice, and due to lack of the functioning of the judicial system, sexual violence and other cases are often dealt with in traditional settlements in contravention of international

human rights standards.

Level of awareness of HIV/AIDS and an acceptable attitude to people living with HIV is 5.3 percent for Darfur compared to the national average of 8.3 percent. This is in a context where recognition, protection and promotion of women’s rights are facing challenges from cultural and religious norms that do not recognize gender equality and women’s rights and where the mechanisms for enforcing rights granted by the Constitution, policies and federal and state laws are either non-existent or ineffective and where armed conflict has become endemic and a way of life.

Political factors of the conflict from a gendered perspective

In principle, the DDPD incorporates gender considerations for good governance within several of its key provisions. Article 1 of the DDPD calls for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and includes reference in particular to the needs of women, children and vulnerable groups during early recovery, reconstruction, rehabilitation and education policies and programmes. Article 7 outlines provisions for the creation of a National Civil Service, which should include affirmative action provisions taking into consideration the need for gender balance among civil service of-

ficers. Article 10 outlines core competencies for the DRA, including responsibility for several gender issues such as women’s advancement, motherhood and childcare, and the development of a gender policy. Under Article 16, the DDPD calls for socio-economic development and improvement in human resource development, with particular emphasis on educational attainment and the elimination of illiteracy among women. Article 27 further outlines a system of grants to be dedicated toward development initiatives related to poverty alleviation, attainment of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and realizing gender equity. Article 55 further enshrines the role of women and youth related to prevention and resolution of conflicts.

These gender equality provisions in the DDPD, taken in conjunction with those outlined in the Interim National Constitution (2005), present an optimistic picture for the advancement of women’s rights in Darfur. Protection and enforcement of these provisions, however, has been and will likely remain a significant challenge in the region. Notably absent from the DDPD is a concrete quota mechanism targeting women’s participation in various bodies prescribed in the document. On the other hand, women’s participation in the political sphere has progressed

moderately in Sudan due in large part to the National Election Law of 2008, which specifically establishes an affirmative action target of 25 percent for women's representation in parliaments in Sudan, but short of the international threshold of 33 percent women's representation in parliament.

The representation of women in the governance structures, in public institutions in Darfur, is poor especially at higher levels of decision making. Women also rarely exist in traditional structures of Native Administration at the Locality level. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Darfur therefore provide an opportunity for women to have a voice and to participate in different issues of concern, especially issues regarding peacebuilding and human rights. However, the cooption of the civil society and the control assumed by the government and security entities, have rendered this opportunity ineffective. Further, CSOs are often directed by political and ethnic allegiances and over-represent educated elite and often urban populations, excluding the perspective of rural constituencies.

In the existing representation by women across Sudan, including Darfur, capacity gaps exist at all levels of leadership among women as aspiring political candidates, leaders within party executive bodies, members of parliament, government actors, academic leaders, youth, and representatives of civil society, and in traditional leadership roles at the community level. Presence in office does not necessarily translate into active participation nor does it imply inclusion. It is noted that the few women occupying public offices in Darfur and across Sudan tend to reflect Sudan's most elite voices and are not representative of broader spectrum of interests, particularly of rural communities they are supposed to represent.

Women are supported more as Beneficiaries than as Actors in Decision Making

Virtually all international development assistance partners and national CSOs involved in humanitarian and recovery programmes/projects in Darfur aim at promoting women's benefits

to enhance women survival and livelihoods conditions from such interventions. The major role played by women is that of beneficiaries from programme/project activities. However, development partners recognize that while the role of women as beneficiary contributes to improvement in women living conditions and livelihoods, it does not empower women to make choices for their current needs and aspiration towards recovery and development of Darfur.

For instance, some international and national CSOs consulted on gender dimension of interventions in Darfur, claim that they do implement some women-specific programme activities such as female reproductive health, education of girl child, foods and livelihoods support to women-headed households, among other activities, by virtue of their respective mandates and organizational objectives. However, most of those activities are directed at providing benefits to better conditions of women as only as beneficiaries. Efforts to promote women leadership positions and participation in decision making are undertaken only within project management arrangements in local communities. Hence, interventions to support promotion of gender equality in Darfur through advocacy and technical support for enhancing women leaderships and participation in decision making on humanitarian and recovery issues within the public service and local communities is lagging behind in Darfur.

Opportunities for Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Darfur

Government structures and mechanisms exist to support gender equality and women empowerment in Darfur. For instance, there is a Ministry of Social Affairs, in each of the five states in Darfur, to coordinate activities of state ministries on gender equality and empowerment issues in Darfur. The states ministries on gender issues are linked to the federal-level Ministry of Social Welfare and Social Security in Khartoum on gender policy and programme towards promoting women empowerment in Sudan. There are also gender focal points in each of the state line ministries for coordination with the

“Preventing and addressing sexual violence is one of the great moral challenges of our time. We need to expand the circle of allies, stakeholders and champions, and sustain the political momentum generated in recent years to propel real change at the community-level. Sexual violence is not a “private” burden to be borne by the victims; it is a social problem requiring a sustained response. Rape is still the only crime that casts a long shadow of social disgrace upon the victim, rather than the victimizer. We must reverse and redirect this stigma, to send a clear signal that the only shame of rape is in committing, commanding or condoning it.”

**- Pramila Patten,
Special Representative
of the Secretary General
on Sexual Violence in
Conflict.**

Training of trainers on conflict-related sexual violence



Group photo of women protection advisers from six United Nations peacekeeping missions

THE FOURTH “TRAINING OF TRAINERS” on the integrated training materials on conflict-related sexual violence was conducted during the second week of July 2017 in Entebbe, Uganda. The training aimed to strengthen skills and knowledge to prevent conflict-related sexual violence, deter perpetrators, protect vulnerable sections of society, and support survivors through integrated action. The goal is to prepare their mission components to effectively implement the conflict-related sexual violence mandate.

In her message, Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, underscored the importance of a multi-sectoral approach by the UN. Thirty-nine participants came from UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East. They included UN military and police personnel, women’s protection advisers, human rights officers, and representatives of Integrated Mission Training Centres. “This training is enhancing capacity of mission colleagues to better implement the conflict-related sexual violence mandate,” said Oshcard Kouadio, Women’s Protection Adviser from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The training workshop was organized by the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Op-

erations and Field Support in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the UN Population Fund, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, MINUSMA, UNA-

MID, UNMISS and UNAMI. The development of the integrated training materials and the organization of the training of trainers were funded by contributions from the Government of the United States and the Government of Japan.

HRS



Participants representing UNAMID at the training workshop in Entebbe, Uganda

The UN and the African Union launch Report on Women's Rights in Africa



Ms Isha Dyfan, Chief, UNAMID Human Rights Section, speaking at the launch in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

“WHEN ALL WOMEN are empowered to make their own choices and share resources, opportunities and decisions as equal partners, every society in Africa will be transformed.” Ms. Isha Dyfan, Chief, Human Rights Section, UNAMID, on behalf of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

On 7 March, in Addis Ababa, OHCHR in collaboration with the African Union and UN Women launched a report on women’s rights in Africa. The report was the first ever AUC report on women’s rights. The report is the first planned series about women’s human rights on the continent that will address various thematic issues.

The report found that there have been great strides in realising women’s rights in Africa - for example, female participation in African legislatures surpasses that of many developed countries. There are now provisions on sexual and gender-based violence, economic, social and cultural rights and non-discrimination in constitutions and policies across the continent. However, in every country in Africa, as around the world, women continue to be denied full enjoyment of their rights.

Among some of the report’s statistics: in six African countries, there is no legal protection for women against domestic violence. In 2013, African women and girls accounted

for 62 percent of all global deaths from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. An estimated 130 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation, mainly in Africa. If current trends continue, almost half of the world’s child brides in 2050 will be African.

In Africa, and globally, it is clear that when women are able to exercise their rights to access to education, skills, and jobs, there is a surge in prosperity, positive health outcomes, and greater freedom and well-being, not only of women but of the whole society. In many countries, gaps in protecting women’s rights are compounded by political instability and conflict. The report stresses that women should not be seen only as victims but, for example, as active agents in formal and informal peace building processes. Among its recommendations, the report calls on African governments to encourage women’s full and productive employment, to recognize the importance of unpaid care and domestic work, and to ensure women can access and control their own economic and financial resources.

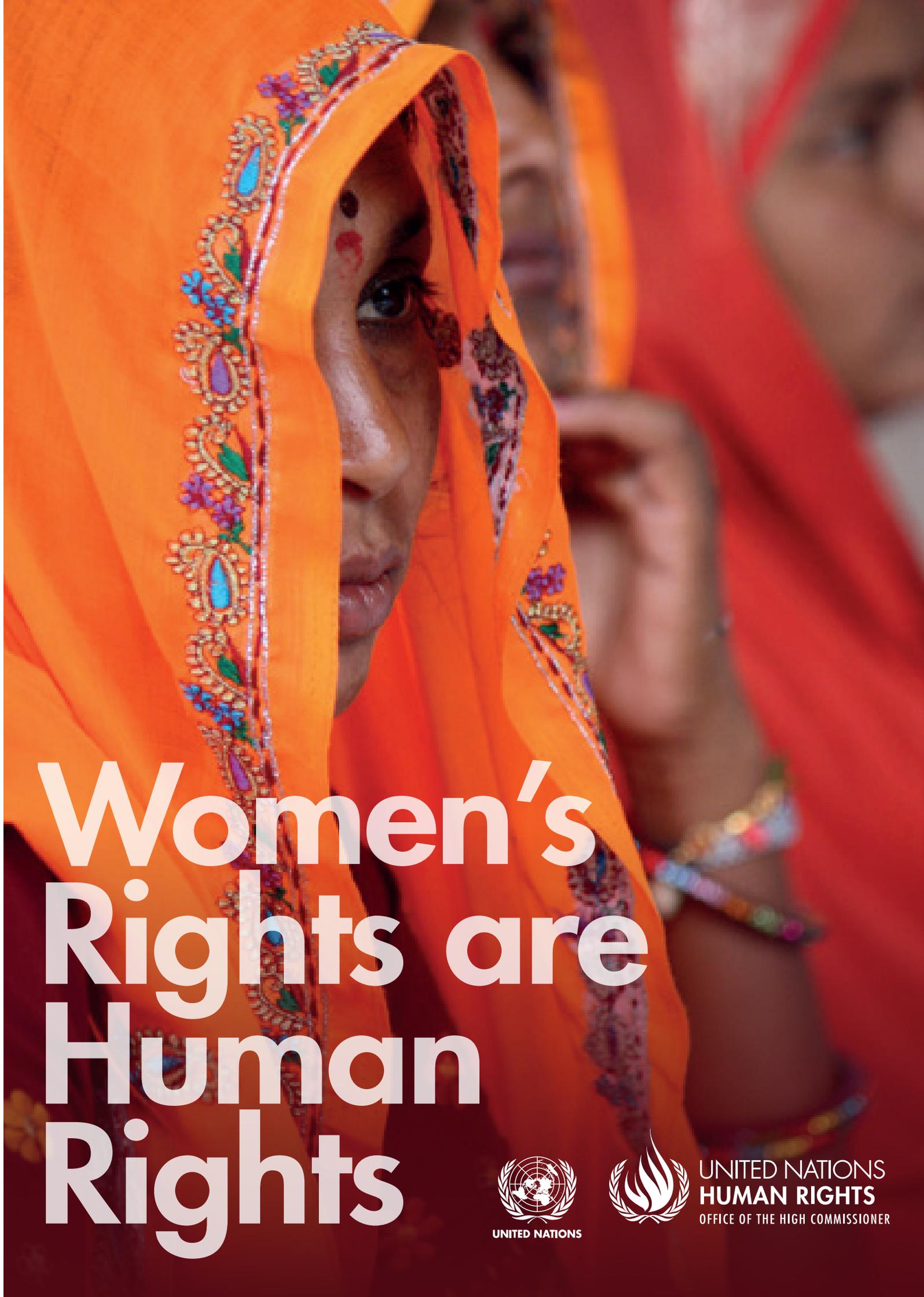
The launch was opened by Ambassador Mfasoni, on behalf of the Chairperson of the AUC and was followed by a round table discussion on the contents of the report. OHCHR was represented by Ms. Isha Dyfan, Chief, Human Rights Section, UNAMID. Speakers included UN and civil society representatives as well as representatives of Mali, US, Finland, Australia, and Botswana Permanent Missions to the AU. **HRS**

“Gender equality and empowerment cannot be achieved without the equal, full and effective participation of women and young people at all levels of decision-making...”

- Moussa Faki Mahamat,
Chairperson of the African
Union Commission



Participants at the launch representing UNAMID Human Rights Section; the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies; and OHCHR regional office for East Africa.



Women's Rights are Human Rights



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