

UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur

# VOICES

of Darfur

JULY 2012

## Designing Sudanese Thobes

**An Interview with  
Darfuri Artist  
Salwa Mukhtar Saleh**

### **Strengthening Ties with Darfur Communities**

*Humanitarian assistance  
through quick-impact projects*

### **Reactivating Traditional Justice Mechanisms**

*Judyia and Ajaweed making a  
comeback in Darfur*

### **Toward Resolving Land Disputes Peacefully**

*Easing political and economic  
tensions in the region*



AFRICAN UNION - UNITED NATIONS  
MISSION IN DARFUR  
(UNAMID)



*Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh, a Darfuri woman, shows a thobe she designed with chiffon. Dr. Saleh says she drew on traditional and modern styles to make this design for evening occasions. This piece is accessorised with crystals that together form wavy lines. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

## IN THIS ISSUE

### NEWS DEPARTMENT

- 3 | Regional Meet Focuses on Small Arms
- 3 | Prison Staff, Inmates Empowered
- 3 | Doha Document Dissemination Continues
- 4 | Legislative Caucus Addresses Gender
- 4 | Child Soldier Agreement Signed
- 5 | Commission Assesses Peace Document
- 6 | Saluting Peacekeepers, Remembering Those Fallen
- 7 | North Darfur Engagement Strengthened

### PEACE PROCESS



#### 8 | Darfur Peace Agreements: Challenges and Opportunities

One year after the adoption of the Doha Peace Document, *Voices of Darfur* examines the evolution of the negotiations and the challenges they have faced.



#### 14 | Toward Resolving Land Disputes Peacefully

UNAMID and its partners have been working with communities across Darfur to address land disputes by revitalizing traditional mechanisms for resolving such conflict.

### HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



#### 18 | Strengthening Ties with Darfur's Communities

UNAMID's leadership is steering the Mission into more quick-impact projects that focus on humanitarian assistance across Darfur, as a way to facilitate recovery and development in the region.

### VIEWPOINT

#### 16 | A Step in the Right Direction for Human Rights

Darfur's Family and Child Protection Unit, the first police unit of its kind in the region, is an example of how a structure can provide redress for victims of human rights violations when multiple organizations focus on a common goal.

### CIVIL AFFAIRS



#### 17 | Reactivating Traditional Justice Mechanisms

Across Darfur, in remote areas far removed from the government's court system, traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms are making a comeback.

### CULTURE



#### 25 | Salwa Mukhtar Saleh on Designing Sudanese Thobes

In a seven-day thobe exhibition in El Fasher, North Darfur, a local designer displays her work, which is influenced by both traditional and contemporary Sudanese fashion.

# EDITOR'S NOTE

As part of our move to continue developing *Voices of Darfur* as a credible news magazine that not only details UNAMID's efforts in Darfur but also tells the many human stories of the region, we'll be increasing the page count of the magazine in the coming months to accommodate several new sections. The new format will give us the space to invite guest columnists, offer data graphs and charts on recent developments in Darfur and strengthen our in-depth coverage with theme issues that will present several articles on a particular topic.

As part of a broader strategy in which we remain committed to the magazine's tagline, "UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur," our intention is to establish an external editorial board that consists of academics and other members of Darfur's brain trust. Through a peer-review process that will facilitate contributed articles for publication in *Voices*, externally written pieces will focus on conflict resolution, sustainable development and other issues of lasting importance to the region.

It is my personal hope that as the magazine expands in the coming months, the multitude of Darfur's voices will be echoed loudly and clearly in its pages through effective reporting and through the valuable contributions of external writers. In line with this objective, we will soon launch a Letters to the Editor page, where we will publish reader comments.

Letters for publication may be submitted in Arabic or English, should be no longer than 150 words, and must refer to an article that has appeared in recent issues of the magazine. In addition, letters to the editor must include the writer's name, address and phone number. We regret that we cannot return or acknowledge unpublished letters. We will notify writers whose letters have been selected for publication in the magazine, and we may shorten letters for space considerations.

To send a letter to the editor by email, put "Letters to the Editor / Voices of Darfur" in the subject line and send the email to [unamid-publicinformation@un.org](mailto:unamid-publicinformation@un.org). To send the letter by post, please address the letter as follows: Head of Publications; Communications and Public Information Division, UNAMID; ARC Compound D2.1; El Fasher, Sudan.

On another note, I am pleased to announce that, due to a new contract coming online soon, we will be able to start printing *Voices* rather than merely distributing it electronically. The last issue of the magazine to roll off the presses was June 2011, so the Publications team is looking forward to the new contract with a great deal of enthusiasm. We will once again be able to put the magazine—Arabic and English editions—in the hands of those who do not have easy access to electronic media.

**Kirk L. Kroeker**  
Head of Publications

## ON THE COVER



*Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh shows a thobe she designed. Dr. Saleh draws on traditional and modern styles to make her thobe designs. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*



*A child from Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced persons performing a traditional dance at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, Darfur, during the commemoration ceremony for Peacekeepers Day on 29 May 2012.*

## VOICES of Darfur

Acting Director of CPID  
Dysane Dorani

Head of Publications  
Kirk L. Kroeker

Public Information Officers  
Ala Mayyahi  
Abdullahi Shuaibu  
Emadeldin Rijal

Public Information Assistant  
Sharon Lukunka

Graphic Designer  
Arie Santoso

Photographers  
Albert González Farran  
Sojoud Elgarrai

Media Relations Officers  
Guiomar Pau Solé  
Rania Abdulrahman

Contributing Writers  
Caterina Violante  
Ariel Rubin

 [facebook.com/UNAMID](https://www.facebook.com/UNAMID)

 [twitter.com/unamidnews](https://twitter.com/unamidnews)

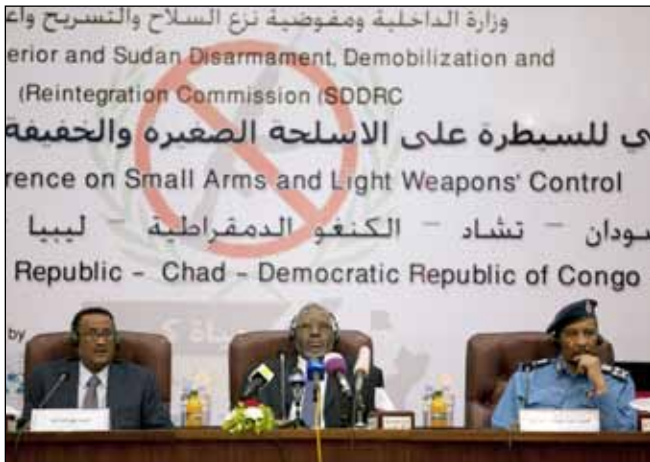
UNAMID Communications  
and Public Information Division (CPID)  
Email: [unamid-publicinformation@un.org](mailto:unamid-publicinformation@un.org)  
Website: <http://unamid.unmissions.org>

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNAMID concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Material contained in this publication may be freely quoted or reprinted, provided credit is attributed to UNAMID.

## Regional Meet Focuses on Small Arms

BY GUIOMAR PAU SOLÉ, CATERINA VIOLANTE AND ARIEL RUBIN



On 23 May 2012, high-ranking representatives from Sudan and surrounding countries gather for the Regional Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons at the Friendship Hall in Khartoum, Sudan. Pictured from left to right are the chairs of the conference: Sudan's Minister of Interior, Ibrahim Mahmoud, Sudan's Vice President, El-haj Adam Yousif, and Director General of the Sudanese Police, Hashi Osman. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

A regional conference on small arms concluded on 23 May in Khartoum with an agreement reached between Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo and Libya to improve their cooperation through the creation of a regional mechanism designed to control, man-

age and safeguard against the proliferation of small arms.

With the support of the Embassy of Germany, the UN Development Programme and UNAMID, the five neighbouring countries came together to promote a set of initiatives in border security, training programmes, information sharing, institution building and the development of new interregional bodies for arms control, conflict reduction and economic development.

In the keynote address, the Sudanese Second Vice President, Dr. Alhaj Adam Yousif, said that there can be no sustainable development as long as citizens persist in carrying illegal small arms. "We want to put into practice what we've said here today: a real, effective and active mechanism from which

all nations here can collect its fruit," he said.

The final declaration, signed by the Ministers of Interior and Security of Sudan, Chad, Libya and Central African Republic and a representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo, called for the continued support of the UN system and the international community in this initiative.

The two-day conference, organized by the Sudan Ministry of Interior and Sudan Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (SDDRC), was attended by the Ministers of Interior and Security of the participant countries and accompanied by representatives from the diplomatic community, international organizations, national officials, security and law enforcement agencies, and academics. ■

## Prison Staff, Inmates Empowered

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU

UNAMID, in collaboration with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), on 9 May launched a series of vocational skills training programmes for prison staff members and juvenile inmates in North Darfur. The training consists of courses in welding, masonry, electrical work and auto mechanics.

Mr. Germain Baricako, Head of UNAMID Rule of Law, spoke at the ceremony at El Fasher Technical School, noting that the six-month course for the prison staff and 45-day training for juvenile offenders represents "an important step that will ensure sustainability of prisons." Mr. Baricako said the Mission is committed to working with the Government of Sudan and other part-

ners to strengthen the prison system in the country.

The representative of the Wali of North Darfur, Dr. Tigani Seinin, said North Darfur is ready to work with UNAMID to improve the prison administration system in the region. The Minister pointed out that training in vocational skills would enable the inmates to become more useful to society after serving their various terms.

Also speaking at the event was Mr. Alemu Kidane Tekie, Officer in Charge of UNDP Rule of Law in North Darfur. "The projects are designed to support the empowerment of local communities as part of the process of restoring the confidence in rule of law, while concurrently strengthening rule-of-law institutions," he said. ■

## Doha Document Dissemination Continues

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

On 15 May, in West Darfur, more than 200 people, including former Chadian refugees, internally displaced persons and nomads from Masteri and Kongo Harasa attended a workshop on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).

Similar workshops were held across Darfur during the month, including on 14 May in Kulbus, West Darfur, where

more than 180 participants attended a session to discuss reconciliation, development funds and the implementation of the DDPD.

Earlier that week, on 12 May, some 200 people gathered in Khartoum for a similar DDPD event to discuss human rights and transitional justice, among other topics. Participants at the event included representatives from women's and youth groups, nongovernmental organizations and leaders from the Darfuri community in Khartoum.

UNAMID continues to facilitate similar workshops throughout the region to promote the DDPD, which was finalized at the All Darfur Stakeholders Conference in May 2011, in Doha, Qatar. In July 2011, the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement signed a protocol agreement to indicate their commitment to the Document, which is now the framework for the comprehensive peace process in Darfur.

UNAMID has supported more than 100 DDPD dissemination workshops across Darfur and in Khartoum. More than 20,000 people have participated in the events. ■

## Abu Shouk, North Darfur



**On 17 May 2012** in Abu Shouk camp for displaced persons in North Darfur, Ahmed Ibrahim Ahmed, age 37, teaches his son Adam, age five, to write sentences of the Koran. Mr. Ahmed is a "fakih," one who practices traditional medicine and rituals. His speciality is a popular potion that is said to give special protection against danger, disease and broken hearts. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## Legislative Caucus Addresses Gender

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

**O**n 17 May, UNAMID and the Darfur Women's Legislative Caucus concluded a three-day advocacy seminar. The forum was set up to assess the challenges faced by women in Darfur, identify gender gaps in Sudanese laws, and examine relevant international and regional human

rights instruments for effective sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention in the region.

More than 45 women representatives from North Darfur and local legislatures, including members of the constitutional committee, the judiciary, the bar association and various government institutions attended the session that took place in El Fasher, North Darfur.

Ms. Halima Tibin Bosh, the North Darfur Advisor to the Wali (Governor) on Women and Child Affairs and the Deputy Chairperson for the North Darfur Committee on SGBV, said the seminar will help strengthen women legislators' role in the State Legislative Council and enhance their capacity in promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls in North Darfur. ■

## Child Soldier Agreement Signed

BY RANIA ABDULRAHMAN

**O**n 10 May, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), a signatory to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, signed an action plan to prohibit the use of child soldiers in LJM and bring the movement into compliance with Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict.

By signing the plan, LJM has committed to end any recruitment and use of child soldiers; release all children found in its ranks; fully cooperate with the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission; take measures to prevent the recruitment of children;

designate a senior-level focal point to interact with the UN; and grant full access to UN teams to monitor compliance.

LJM is the fifth armed movement in Darfur to have submitted an action plan on child soldiers. UNAMID is in discussion with other armed movements, as well as with the

Government of Sudan, to develop additional action plans.

"UNAMID is here to assist the parties to the conflict and local communities to guarantee effective protection of the children of Darfur," said Boubacar Dieng, Head of UNAMID's Child Protection Unit. ■

# Commission Assesses Peace Document

BY RANIA ABDULRAHMAN

On 28 May in Doha, Qatar, the third meeting of the Implementation Follow-Up Commission (IFC) considered the progress made in implementing the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

The meeting took note of achievements such as the inauguration of the Darfur Regional Authority, the establishment of the Special Court and the creation of the High Committee on Darfur chaired by the President of Sudan.

Members expressed concern over the slow pace of the implementation process, mainly occasioned by delays in the disbursement of funds and adequate provisions of required logistics to the Darfur Regional Authority. Members also expressed concern about the fighting between the non-signatories and the Government of Sudan.



At the third meeting of the Follow-up Commission of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, on 28 May 2012, representatives discuss the implementation challenges and other issues related to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Photo by Rania Abdulrhman, UNAMID.

The IFC meeting was chaired by Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud, Deputy Prime Minister of Sudan, the Liberation and Justice Movement, representatives of Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, China, Egypt, France, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States, the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Conference and UNAMID. ■

## Forog, North Darfur



On 30 May 2012, girls from Forog, North Darfur, welcome the arrival of UNAMID. Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) Aicha-tou Mindaoudou Souleymane inaugurated a UNAMID-sponsored clinic and three schools in the area. Photo by Albert González Farran.

## El Fasher, North Darfur



On 29 May 2012, a child from Abu Shouk camp in North Darfur performs a traditional dance at UNAMID headquarters during the commemoration ceremony for the International Day of the United Nations Peacekeepers. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## Saluting Peacekeepers, Remembering Those Fallen

BY GUIOMAR PAU SOLÉ



On 29 May, a member of the UNAMID contingent from Nigeria plays music at UNAMID headquarters during the commemoration ceremony for the International Day of the United Nations Peacekeepers. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

On 29 May, UNAMID paid tribute to the sacrifices of those who have served in the name of peace, commemorating the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. This year's occasion, which honoured the 120,000 peacekeepers serving in 17 missions around the world and mourning those who have died in service, fo-

cused on the theme "Peace-keeping Is a Global Partnership."

At UNAMID's headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur, Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political), Ms. Aichatou Mindaoudou Souleymane, presided over the ceremony and was accompanied by representatives from the Government of North Darfur and Mission officials. The programme included a military and police parade, cultural performances and a solemn laying of wreaths.

The representative of the Wali (Governor) and Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr. Adam Mohamed Ahmed Alnahla, expressed his condolences "for those who lost their lives serving peace in this country."

"The ultimate goal of any UN peacekeeping mission is to no longer be necessary," said Ms. Mindaoudou, conveying the UN Secretary-General's message for the day. "Until we reach that objective, we make every effort for peacekeeping to be as effective and efficient as possible."

The DJSR added that UNAMID is a peacekeeping mission that represents a close partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. "This partnership, with peacekeepers from both institutions working together side by side, is unprecedented," she said.

The ceremony paid special tribute to the departing peacekeepers of Thailand. Similar events were held at UNAMID's offices around the region. ■



## North Darfur Engagement Strengthened

BY EMADELDIN RIJAL

On 30 May, a delegation from UNAMID headquarters, led by Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) Aichatou Mindaoudou Souleymane, visited Forog village, roughly 140 kilometres northwest of El Fasher, to inaugurate the completion of the first set of quick-impact projects (QIPs) in a Movement area in North Darfur.

Hundreds of men, women and children, as well as members of Sudan Liberation Army /Abdul Wahid, received the delegation to inaugurate Forog's UNAMID-sponsored projects, chiefly the village's newly constructed health centre. The implemented QIPs, which were facilitated by UNAMID's South African contingent, also in-

clude projects in education and sanitation.

"Let me assure you that it will be our constant endeavour to find additional ways and means to help your community," said Ms. Mindaoudou in a speech delivered at the ceremony. "All our efforts are now focused and looking toward a lasting peace for all Darfuris."

In addition, Ms. Mindaoudou expressed the commitment of the Mission to continue facilitating the work of UN Agencies and humanitarian actors. She went on to stress the Mission's dedication to advancing its mandate throughout Darfur and supporting all those in need.

In restructuring its QIPs programme and ensuring that projects are priority-led and



On 30 May 2012, UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) Aichatou Mindaoudou Souleymane meets members of the Forog community in North Darfur, inside a new clinic sponsored by UNAMID. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

community-based, UNAMID has reinvigorated its efforts in local communities. The quick-impact projects—geared at improving health and sanitation, empowering women and youth, promoting educa-

tion, and protecting the environment—have become a foundation for consolidating UNAMID's engagement with Darfuri communities, including nomads, returnees and internally displaces persons. ■

## Krinding Camp, West Darfur



On 3 June 2012, women leaders of Krinding camp in West Darfur meet with Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmond Mulet, who announced that 29 quick-impact projects had been approved for West Darfur. The ASG's three-day visit to Darfur, included meetings with community leaders, the Government and UNAMID officials. Photo by Albert González Farran.

## Darfur Peace Agreements: Challenges and Opportunities

One year after the adoption of the Doha Peace Document, *Voices of Darfur* examines the evolution of the negotiations and the challenges they have faced.

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU

The conflict in Darfur has led to nearly two million displaced persons living in camps spread around the region and hundreds of thousands of refugees living in Chad and the Central African Republic. Several actors have engaged in the search for an effective and sustainable peace agreement that not only will successfully address the root causes of the conflict and enable the return of displaced people but also will bring Darfur's armed movements and the Sudanese government to common ground.

The history of the Darfur peace process dates back to September 2003 and the mediation of the Chadian government in the Abeche Peace Talks, which led to the first ceasefire agreement between Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). While the conclusions of the talks were not formally implemented, they were considered the first clear declaration of the political nature of the conflict and the growing international concern. The talks also represented the beginning of the African Union's efforts to take the lead on addressing the situation.

The first official talks mediated by the AU were held on 8 April 2004 in N'Djamena, Chad, where a ceasefire humanitarian agreement was signed. The African Union mediation then moved to the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia, where an agreement on establishing a ceasefire commission and the deployment of observers in Darfur was signed on May 2004.

Former Nigerian President and then AU President, Olusegun Obasanjo, moved the negotiations to Abuja, Nigeria, where six rounds of peace talks were held in the run-up to the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) on 5 May 2006 by the Government of Sudan and SLA Minni Minawi. Unfortunately, while the talks resulted in two protocols, a declaration and an agreement, the agreement was not supported by the two major movements, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and SLA Abdul Wahid, or other smaller movements.

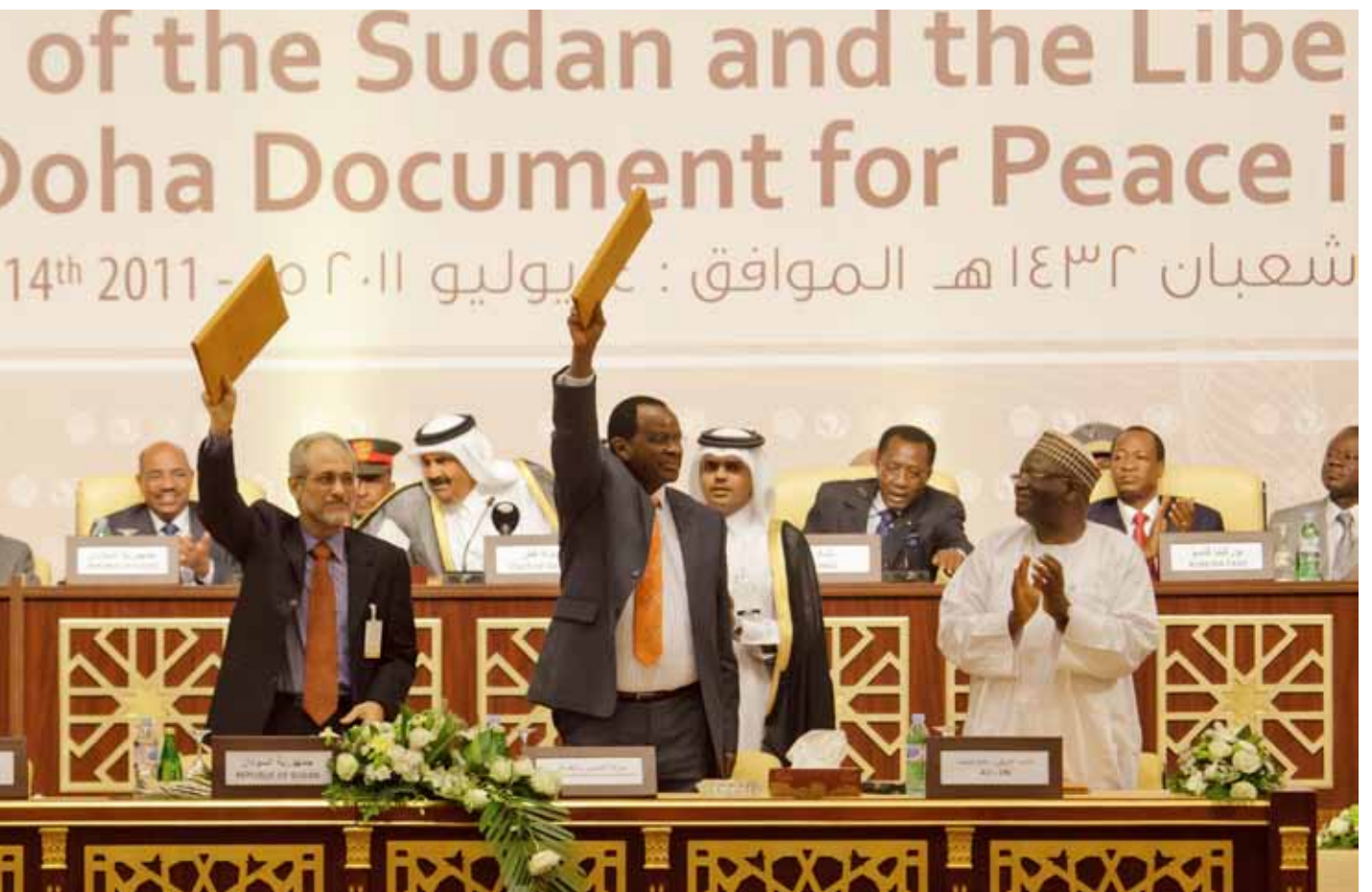
The Darfur peace process was deadlocked after the Abuja meetings, as other movements refused the Abuja Peace Agreement, claiming it did not meet all their demands. Still, since that time, developments toward peace in Darfur have included the appointment of Salim Ahmed Salim and Jan Eliasson in November 2006 as AU and UN joint mediators whose mission was to unify the rebel ranks and have a single mediation process. As a result of their work, meetings were held in Arusha and twice in Tripoli.

In October 2007, the AU and UN envoys organized the Sirte Conference, which brought together several armed



movements, Darfur civil society groups and representatives from the Government of Sudan to forge a peace agreement. The conference was boycotted by SLA/AW and JEM Khalil Ibrahim, but attended by SLA Unity, SLA Khamis Abbaker, and JEM Collective Leadership. Negotiators sought to find answers to issues that were not resolved by the Abuja deal, but the conference did not achieve any results.

Consequently, in June 2008, in the absence of progress in negotiations, Mr. Salim and Mr. Eliasson resigned as mediators, saying that the parties to the conflict were not "ready to sit down and make the necessary compromises." The following month, in July 2008, the AU



On 14 July 2011, the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement signed the Doha Darfur Peace Document in Doha, Qatar. From left to right are Djibril Bassolé, Joint Chief Special Mediator (Burkina Faso), Ahmad Bind Abdulla Al Mahmound, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Qatar), Dr. Ghazi Salah Eldeen Atabani, Presidential Advisor, Dr. Elitigani Seisi Mohamed Ateem, Chair of the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) and Ibrahim Gambari, UNAMID Joint Special Representative. Photo by Olivier Chassot, UNAMID.

appointed a Panel for Darfur, which later became the AU High Level Panel headed by Presidents Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Abdulsalam Abubakar (Nigeria) and Paul Buyoya (Burundi). The panel was set up to study the Darfur situation and recommend measures to promote peace, justice and reconciliation.

Subsequently, in August 2008, Djibril Bassolé was appointed AU and UN Joint Chief Mediator to move the process forward. But the Darfur situation and the need for enduring peace continued to attract the attention and involvement of countries and regional organizations, including the Arab League. In September 2008, a League of Arab States resolution proposed that Qatar host the peace ne-

**“We want this particular agreement to pave the way for concrete peace in the whole of Darfur because it is time to end the conflict and to promote growth and development.”**

**—Hauwa Hamid**

gotiations. The negotiations, which were intermittent, stalled on several occasions.

It was not until November 2009 that Darfur civil society representatives were invited to Doha, Qatar, to participate in the Doha 1 and later the Doha 2 talks as well as the All Darfur Stakeholders Conference, a series of meetings that were finalized in May 2011.

Meanwhile, in February 2010, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), a coalition of small armed movements, was formed through the combination of the Tripoli and Addis Ababa groups, while JEM suspended its participation in talks with the Government of Sudan. In June 2010, negotiations between the Sudanese government and LJM commenced



On 28 May 2011, talks were stalled at the All Darfur Stakeholders Conference in Doha, Qatar, after representatives of displaced persons and civil society initially refused to participate. The refusal was brought on by delays in the arrival of several leaders. AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassolé and Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud addressed the representatives' concerns, assuring them of the mediation's efforts to ensure the full participation of all invitees. The discussions later resumed. Photo by Olivier Chassot, UNAMID.

**“We can't still be living this way; we need a holistic peace for all of our people.”**

**— Mohammed Hamdan**

in Doha and concluded on 14 July 2011 with the adoption of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), which was signed by GoS and the LJM on the same date.

The document covers several social and political aspects of the situation in Darfur, including power-sharing, wealth-sharing and compensation; the return of refugees and displaced persons; and human rights and fundamental freedoms, among other factors. The DDPD represents years of negotiations, culminating in the All Darfur Stakeholders

Conference that brought together more than 500 people, including internally displaced persons, refugees, civil society representatives, political parties, special envoys from more than 13 countries and representatives of international and regional organizations.

As a landmark achievement, the Doha conference provided a forum for face-to-face engagement between LJM, JEM, GoS and Darfuri civil society groups. “Indeed, a cross-section of stakeholders endorsed the DDPD precisely because it is recognized as address-

ing the root causes of the conflict and its consequences,” says UNAMID Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari.

Subsequent to these developments, the United Nations Security Council, on 29 July 2011, through resolution 2003, welcomed the DDPD signing and demanded that “all parties to the conflict make every effort to reach a permanent ceasefire settlement [...] to bring a stable and durable peace to the region.” The Security Council recognized the potential complementary role of a Darfur-based political process led by the AU and the UN and called on the Government of Sudan and armed movements to contribute to creating the enabling environment for its implementation.

JSR Gambari has said that, while the signing of the DDPD by the two parties represents an important step forward in the search for sustainable peace,

المؤتمر الموسّع لأصحاب المصلحة في دارفور  
 ALL DARFUR STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE  
 CONFERENCE DES PARTIES PRENANTES AU DARFOUR  
 الدوحة ٢٧-٣١ مايو ٢٠١١ - DOHA 27-31 MAY 2011



*The All Darfur Stakeholders Conference in Doha, Qatar, gave participants the opportunity to form working groups to discuss specific issues such as human rights and peaceful coexistence. More than 500 people attended the conference. Photo by Olivier Chassot, UNAMID.*

many daunting challenges remain, including how to continue engagement of the holdout armed movements. JSR Gambari continues to urge the Government of Sudan and armed movements to come to an agreement. “The DDPD could be considered an important step forward in the search for peace and stability in Darfur,” he says.

UNAMID has provided technical expertise and logistical support for the dissemination of the document, and has urged nonsignatory movements to sign the DDPD. UNAMID currently chairs the Ceasefire Commission, set up by the DDPD to meet periodically and conduct verification-of-forces exercises as part of the final security arrangements set out by the peace agreement.

UNAMID has worked across Darfur and in Khartoum with local authorities and civil society organizations to conduct

“Indeed, a cross-section of stakeholders endorsed the DDPD precisely because it is recognized as addressing the root causes of the conflict and its consequences.”

—Ibrahim Gambari

more than 130 workshops to disseminate the DDPD. Workshop participants continue to express support for the document and for UNAMID’s role in promoting it. Members of Darfuri society, including women, youth and internally displaced persons, are actively participating in the dissemination workshops.

“We want this particular agreement to pave the way for concrete peace in the whole of Darfur because it is time to end the conflict and promote growth

and development,” says Ms. Hauwa Hamid, a woman leader in El Fasher. “In spite of any obstacles in the participation of other Darfuris in the workshops and the nonsignatory groups not joining us in this endeavour, we are keen in making it a success story and call on the parties to join the DDPD implementation.”

Lamecke Kawiche, Officer-in-Charge of UNAMID’s Civil Affairs section, points out that the DDPD dis-



*Following the second Doha conference attended by 250 Darfur civil society representatives, fighting broke out in Kalma camp, South Darfur, on 24 July 2010 between internally displaced persons (IDPs) in favour of participating at the conference and those who were opposed to it and claimed they were not fully represented. The clashes resulted in at least 35 fatalities and the displacement of some 25,000 IDPs from the camp. UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative Mohammed Yonis visited Nyala on 1 August 2010 and met with the Wali (Governor) of South Darfur and the leaders of Kalma camp to discuss the security and humanitarian situation, and to address the presence of weapons inside the IDP camp. Similar incidents occurred in Hamadiya camp near Zalingei, resulting in three people killed. Photo by Olivier Chassot, UNAMID.*

semination activities are likely to amount to the most widespread consultation ever held in Darfur, drawing more than 23,000 participants to date. “The DDPD workshops have included many more Darfuris than any previous peace process and the effort is still ongoing to lure the other holdout movements to join in ensuring lasting peace and security in the region,” he says.

Mr. Kawiche noted that there have been no reported incidents during the workshops, and no efforts by the Sudanese government to curb anyone’s freedom of speech or expression. “This is a success story for the DDPD,” he says. “The key institutions provided for in the DDPD have now been established and some budgetary provisions made to the Darfur Regional Authority and its programmes.”

Out of the new administrative entities established by the DDPD framework, the Darfur Regional Authority is

arguably the most notable. The DRA, which is chaired by Eltigani Seisi, is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the DDPD stipulations and post-conflict development activities. Its 12-member executive organ includes the governors of the now five states of Darfur, 10 ministers, four commissioners and the chair of the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund. The members, appointed by the President of Sudan, have the status of State Minister. Five of them are members of LJM.

In a recent interview in Khartoum, Mr. Seisi said that the implementation of the document is for all the people of Darfur and expressed his commitment to work with everyone to ensure the full implementation of the document and to address the issue of voluntary return of those who are internally displaced. “Despite the challenges, we are optimistic that the people of Darfur will make

achievements in changing the situation in the region,” he said. “The international community has assured its support to help us develop our states.”

On the prospects of the DDPD achieving its ultimate purpose, Cajetan Banseka, a UNAMID Political Affairs Officer, says that UNAMID will continue to focus on those who have not signed. “The window of opportunity must not be allowed to close,” he says. “The dissemination exercise aims at delivering the DDPD text and communicating its content to increase greater awareness of the peace agreement and what it holds for the people of Darfur.”

Mr. Banseka, who has urged the government and other parties to ensure that the DDPD message is taken to every corner of Darfur to boost its acceptability and ensure proper implementation, cites the Darfur Regional Authority, the establishment of the Special Court and the creation of the High-Level Commit-

“The DDPD workshops have included many more Darfuris than any previous peace process and the effort is still ongoing to lure the other holdout movements to join in ensuring lasting peace and security in the region.”

—Lamecke Kawiche

tee on Darfur chaired by President Omar Al-Bashir as several milestones in the movement of the DDPD. “In terms of power-sharing, a lot has been done, and we are making efforts to see that the parties and Government of Sudan live up to expectations,” he added.

Even as measurable progress is being made in the dissemination of the DDPD, observers have expressed concern over the slow pace of its general implementation, mainly occasioned by delays in the disbursement of funds and adequate provisions of required logistics to the DRA. Others have voiced concern about the fighting between the nonsignatories and the Government of Sudan in some parts of the country.

Still others have said there is great need to focus on building consensus among international partners, and have pointed to the dire situation of Sudan’s economy and the risk posed by the skirmishes on the border between Sudan and South Sudan as impediments to the progress of the DDPD. “The real challenge, however, is whether we have the ability to address these challenges and confront them with the desired political will rather than shy away from them,” says Mohammed Hamdan, a Darfur-based human right activist. “We can’t still be living this way; we need a holistic peace for all of our people.”

Meanwhile, JSR Gambari has been briefing UN member states and the international community on the progress made in the dissemination and implementation of the Doha Document. He has been pressing key international actors to lend concrete support to UNAMID’s efforts to move the peace process forward while encouraging the holdout movements to

return to the negotiating table.

The Mission’s leadership has described UNAMID’s work in protecting civilians in Darfur and facilitating pro-

ected access to humanitarian workers as resulting in a substantial reduction in combat-related violence in the region and allowing more displaced people to return to their homes. Still, despite some gains, there is more work to be done. An estimated 1.7 million people remain sheltering in camps across Darfur and more than 350,000 refugees are living in Chad and the Central African Republic.

While there are still several detractors and holdouts, there are many others who are looking to the DDPD as the most viable way to address the needs of Darfur’s displaced and the others living in the region, and to solve the core problems that created the conflict. ■

*On 8 February 2012, in El Fasher, Darfur, hundreds of people attended a rally as part of the launch of the temporary headquarters of the Darfur Regional Authority. The DRA is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the DDPD as well as all post-conflict development activities and projects. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*





# Toward Resolving Land Disputes Peacefully

UNAMID and its partners have been working with communities across Darfur to address land disputes by revitalizing traditional mechanisms for resolving such conflict.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

**F**or many years now, land disputes in Darfur have heightened the political and economic tensions in the region. Land disputes between seminomadic livestock herders and those who farm the land were one of the foundations for the Darfur conflict, which has continued now for many years. To address this issue, the African Union - United Nations

Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and its partners have been working with communities across Darfur to address land disputes and encourage peaceful coexistence.

UNAMID's Civil Affairs section has been working directly with the Darfur Land Commission, which was formed under the Transitional Darfur Regional

Authority and is now under the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA). The Darfur Land Commission was set up in 2006 under the terms of the Darfur Peace Agreement, which stipulated, among other things, that those who had seized land by force during the hostilities should not automatically retain the right to settle there.





Women and children from rural areas outside El Fasher, North Darfur, walk long distances each day to collect firewood for their families. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

**“Most of the IDP communities living in camps may have owned land before they were forced to flee, and therefore others may be occupying their land.”**

**—Clemens Bessem-Asu**

According to UNAMID Legal Affairs, individuals from other tribes that do not own land may be allowed by another tribe to settle on a particular piece of land and use it. “The universal principle of law dictates that one cannot gain land by force,” says Clemens Bessem-Asu, a UNAMID Legal Affairs Officer.

In an effort to address the root causes of land disputes, UNAMID has been developing a comprehensive database designed to provide information about the natural resources in Darfur. The information is expected to be useful in formulat-

ing policies regarding the governance of natural resources in the area.

In addition, UNAMID Civil Affairs has been working with communities across Darfur to revitalize traditional mechanisms for resolving conflict and help Darfuris solve land disputes more efficiently than they would otherwise be able to do through the court system. (See “Reactivating Traditional Justice Mechanisms” in this issue of *Voices of Darfur*.)

The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), signed between the Government of Sudan and the Libera-

tion and Justice Movement, was a culmination of two years of negotiations. Chapter three of the DDPD addresses land development and management. “Mechanisms shall be established to ensure the sustainable management and use of lands and other natural resources,” the document stipulates. “All citizens affected by land development and natural resource use shall be consulted and their views taken into consideration.”

The DDPD also addresses compensation issues by stating that individuals whose property or means of livelihood have been adversely affected because of development and exploitation of natural resources are entitled to compensation. In addition, the DDPD addresses traditional rights, and indicates that no individual or group of individuals should be deprived of any traditional or historical rights to their land.

Despite the presence in the DDPD of mechanisms for dealing with land issues,



*A woman on the outskirts of Kutum, North Darfur, 8 August 2011. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

not all movements in Darfur have signed the DDPD, leading to a politically complex environment for dealing with land disputes. Displaced persons in Darfur cite land occupation as the main reason for not returning to their place of origin. “Most of the IDP communities living in camps may have owned land before they were forced to flee, and therefore others may be occupying their land,” says Mr. Bessem-Asu.

In addition, in some areas of Darfur, conflicts have arisen between traditionally sedentary farming communities and the nomadic communities that now have resorted to farming as a result of changing lifestyles. To address this situation, UNAMID continues to promote inter-

**Despite the presence in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur of mechanisms for dealing with land issues, not all movements in Darfur have signed the DDPD, leading to a politically complex environment for dealing with land disputes.**

community dialogue, in partnership with local leaders, so decisions about resource sharing and land use can be reached amicably.

On 11 May 2012, 128 countries in the UN Committee on World Food Security unanimously adopted a policy to

protect local populations. The document calls on governments to be transparent about land deals, consult local communities and defend women’s rights to own land and to protect the rights of indigenous peoples who use the land. The document also emphasizes the responsibility



Internally displaced persons farming in Zam Zam camp, North Darfur, 6 February 2012. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

of businesses and multinational corporations to respect human rights when they move into an area.

The people living in Darfur, whether nomadic or sedentary, depend on land for their sustenance, not only for food but also for the traditional medicines they use for healing. And among its many other uses, the land is of course where the people of Darfur build or set up their homes and raise their families. It is for these reasons that UNAMID's leadership continues to stress that resolving ongoing land disputes and developing more efficient mechanisms for dealing with them are crucial factors in fostering durable peace in the region. ■

## Owning Land in Darfur

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

Darfur was an independent state ruled by Sultans until 1916, when the last Sultan, Ali Dinar, was overthrown by the British. Darfur is unique among the regions of Sudan when it comes to laws that govern land relationships.

In Sudan, in general, land acquisition and ownership is governed by statutory laws, customary laws and general principles of Islamic law in cases where there are no legal provisions. The Sudanese transitional constitution of 2005, the Civil Transactions Act of 1984 and the Origins of Judgments Act of 1983 all serve as mechanisms for determining land acquisition and ownership in Sudan.

According to the Civil Transactions Act, all land unregistered by 6 April 1970 is considered government land. Therefore, any person granted land by the Government of Sudan is said to have a legal right to use it.

Customary law, which was developed by the Fur Sultans of Darfur, is still in force and followed by

courts and administrative organs of government in Darfur, as well as by tribal leaders and elders of the communities. Elders and tribal leaders use these customary laws to resolve disputes and determine appropriate land settlement. The rules of customary law are not written; rather, they are memorized by the elders and tribal leaders.

In Darfur, customary law, or *ha-wakeer*, applies to lands that are granted by Darfur Sultans to tribal leaders, nobles, religious figures, warriors and others who serve the Sultans. Every tribe or family that acquires land, according to customary law, has a Sheikh or someone elected to collect revenue from the farmers or from those who use the land for grazing their cattle.

Those who own land in Darfur are governed by customary law that prohibits them from abusing their ownership. This specific customary law is called the Dali Code, named after one of the Fur Sultans who introduced it. ■

## Strengthening Ties with Darfur's Communities

UNAMID's leadership is steering the Mission into more quick-impact projects that focus on humanitarian assistance across Darfur, as a way to facilitate recovery and development in the region.

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU

In December 2011, as part of an effort to reinvigorate the African Union - United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) mandate, the Mission restructured its quick-impact projects (QIPs) programme. The new programme consists of six priorities: health; early recovery and livelihoods; empowerment of underrepresented populations; environmental protection; education; and water and sanitation.

QIPs are part of UNAMID's focus on early recovery and development, and are meant to support initiatives oriented on basic aspects of life. By extension, QIPs are designed to address the underlying problems that have contributed to the situation in Darfur.

"The populations affected by the crisis [in Darfur] require lifesaving support," says Zurab Elzarov, a UNAMID Humanitarian Affairs Officer. "Their communities, institutions and livelihoods have often been physically destroyed and weakened, so recovery programming works to restore services, livelihood opportunities and governance capacity."

Since December of last year, the Mission's leadership has been reinvigorating its focus on QIPs with a sweeping strategy designed to facilitate humanitarian intervention across Darfur. In a

recent town hall meeting in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari identified QIPs as essential in supporting UNAMID's drive for social integration, conflict resolution and reconciliation, and that, as such, they are contributing to the Darfur peace process.

UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) Aichatou Mindaoudou Souleymane is chair of the QIPs committee and has taken on an active role in seeing the projects to completion. In February 2012, for example, Ms. Mindaoudou launched nine development projects in Kuma Garadayat, North Darfur. Kuma Garadayat is a constellation of 11 villages with a population of more than 4,000 people who returned to the village in 2009 after being displaced by the conflict.

"UNAMID is committed to helping communities like Kuma Garadayat rebuild and restart," said DJSR-P Souleymane, speaking to the community during the inauguration for a quick-impact project in the area. "UNAMID will continue to support you in your efforts to advance peace and prosperity in your communities."

UNAMID facilitates each project by providing up to \$25,000 directly to a



nongovernmental organization (NGO), which works with UNAMID and the community to see the project to completion. The local community typically shares in the labour and implementation. In the case of one Kuma Garadayat building project, the villagers provided 36,000 bricks and manual labour, while UNAMID provided cement and tools, as well



*Girls from Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced persons (IDP), North Darfur, dance and sing to celebrate the inauguration ceremony of 10 new classrooms in three Abu Shouk schools, 18 April 2012. The rooms were built by UNAMID's Rwandan Battalion 29 as part of a quick-impact project. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

as overall support through UNAMID's Senegalese engineering company and Rwandan troops.

The Mission finances such projects and reports on their implementation to the UN's Security Council, Second Committee and General Assembly. Accountability for the implementation of the QIPs rests with UNAMID, which works

with a wide range of partners in the UN family as well as with national and international agencies to achieve the desired objectives.

UNAMID has sponsored more than 500 QIPs in Darfur alone, and has completed almost 350. Those that have not yet been finished are in various stages of completion or are in the process of

being initiated by the UNAMID's various divisions. All projects are undertaken with the direct involvement of the men, women and children of the communities, which actively participate in the work.

"We really appreciate the efforts of UNAMID and its workers for bringing amenities and services to our people; we are very delighted," says Malam Mohammed Omer,

## Quick-Impact Projects Since 2007

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU

Since the start of quick-impact projects in Darfur, UNAMID has been working closely with the community and with nongovernmental organizations to address the basic issues that have led to the conflict in Darfur and to provide ways to improve the living conditions of the people in the region.

The number of QIPs conducted in Darfur since 2007 break down as follows: educational projects (147), health (32), water and sanitation (46), women's empowerment (27), community development (25), as well as a host of projects in early recovery, environment and agriculture.

Examples of the projects conducted in Darfur include the construction of various classrooms and other facilities in schools; the installation of water pumps and wells to aid in the irrigation of farmlands and enable the local population to enjoy drinking water; and the building of garbage disposal and waste management facilities to ensure cleanliness and improve the environment for better living conditions.

Women and the nomadic community were not left out of the QIPs programme. Various women's empowerment projects were implemented, and a series of workshops to find lasting solutions for nomads in Darfur were undertaken. A Darfur community leader, Mohamed Hamid, summed it up: "The projects have really transformed our communities and we are now focusing more on growth and development to improve our lives and also live in peace and harmony." ■

a resident of the Abu Shouk internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in El Fasher, North Darfur. He says that UNAMID's cooperation with the local population will enhance the peace process and help people refocus their minds on development instead of conflict.

Nafisa Mohammed Ismail, a Dafuri activist, says she is happy with the development projects being implemented by UNAMID to raise the living standards of IDPs, as well as the communities around Darfur. "It is really gratifying and commendable," she says.

As one of the essential enablers of QIPs in Darfur, UNAMID's military component has gone well beyond its core protection mandate to focus on humanitarian activities in support of local communities. These activities have included improving schools, grading roads, constructing bridges, clearing unexploded ordnance, digging water boreholes and training locals on new techniques for farming and construction.

So far, from 2011 to date, UNAMID military peacekeepers have worked on 23 projects altogether. On 18 April 2012,

Rwandese Battalion 29 (RwanBatt 29) dedicated 10 completed school classrooms to the Abu Shouk community. At the ceremony, the camp residents thanked UNAMID in general and especially the Rwandan peacekeepers, called "blood brothers" that day by the residents of the community.

Early this year, members of RwanBatt 23 helped the local community build a fully furnished school. The aim was to support the sustainable development of Turba village, a few kilometers south of El Fasher, North Darfur. The residents of the village were full of praise for the troops, for what they considered a great achievement that will have a lasting impact.

Other UNAMID military components continue their engagement with the Darfuri population, assisting in the implementation of various QIPs. Several such projects were inaugurated in April 2012 in North Darfur by UNAMID Force Commander Lt.-Gen. Patrick Nyamvumba.

"UNAMID is committed to bringing sustainable peace to Darfur; investing in education is investing on the future

generation," said the Force Commander, assuring the people at the camp that UNAMID will continue its support to the communities. In addition to its QIPs work, the military component has continued to facilitate implementation of its security protocol through routine patrols and other security measures to ensure the protection of civilians and create easier access for UN agencies and humanitarian organizations to provide succour to those in need.

In El Fasher, UNAMID and El Fasher Rural Development Network, an NGO, built a theatre and a teachers'





*On 29 March 2011, in Muhkjar, West Darfur, peacekeepers from Thailand cross a bridge they helped rebuild. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

Despite the absence of a comprehensive peace in Darfur, there is growing recognition among humanitarian organizations of the need to increase the number of recovery and development activities that directly support durable solutions for IDPs.

conference hall at Umm Ayeman Basic School for Girls. The initiative was designed to enhance children's learning

skills and improve the understanding of literature through drama performance. In collaboration with the North Dar-

fur Minister for Education, UNAMID equipped El Fasher with a computer training centre for secondary school teachers and students. The centre can accommodate some 100 people. UNAMID provided 28 computers, a screen, a projector and furniture.

In March, in West Darfur, UNAMID sponsored two QIPs in Mukjar town to facilitate work opportunities for communities in the area. The projects, which collectively cost about US\$50,000, include construction and agriculture training and were undertaken by the Thailand Battalion (ThaiBatt),



UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) Aichatou Mindaoudou Souleymane meets the people of Forog, North Darfur, near the new clinic sponsored by UNAMID. Quick-impact projects also funded the construction of three new schools in the area. Photo by Albert González Farran.

which has demonstrated practical experience in conducting similar community-based training in and around Mukjar. ThaiBatt has successfully completed construction of a drinking water project and the rehabilitation of the main bridge in Mukjar town.

According to latest World Food Programme and International Organization for Migration census, some 1.7 million IDPs reside in various camps across Darfur. Many, if not most, of these IDPs have benefitted from UNAMID's QIPs programme. Such humanitarian assistance is designed to promote self-reliance and pave the way for more elaborate recovery activities.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 140,000 IDPs and refugees returned to Darfur in 2011. This number includes 31,000 verified refugee returns from Chad, mostly infor-

**“UNAMID is committed to helping communities like Kuma Garadayat rebuild and restart.”**

**—Aichatou Mindaoudou Souleymane**

mal settlements along the Chadian-Sudanese border, and 109,000 verified IDP returns. The IDP returns are divided as follows: 43,000 returns in West Darfur, 52,000 in South Darfur and 16,000 in North Darfur.

Despite the absence of a comprehensive peace in Darfur, there is growing recognition among humanitarian organizations of the need to increase the number of recovery and development activities that directly support durable solutions for IDPs. UNAMID's leadership,

for its part, is continuing to stress that UNAMID will do what it can to facilitate the improvement of basic services to help make returns sustainable.

“Let me assure you that it will be my constant endeavour to find additional ways and means to help the Darfur community,” said DJSR-P Souleymane in a recent speech to inaugurate several quick-impact projects in North Darfur. “All our efforts are now focused on and looking toward a lasting peace for all the people of Darfur.” ■



# A Step in the Right Direction for Human Rights

Darfur's Family and Child Protection Unit, the first police unit of its kind in the region, is an example of how a structure can provide redress for victims of human rights violations when multiple organizations focus on a common goal.

BY CHRISTIAN S. MIKALA

**I**nternally displaced persons, especially women and children, are vulnerable to human rights violations in conflict areas. The international community has dedicated a great deal of effort to frame laws and conventions for their protection. Despite these efforts, atrocities against children and gender-based violence against women continue to be committed around the world.

One of the challenges faced by victims of human rights violations has been the perceived lack of action by law enforcement agencies. Several factors contribute to this situation, including limited technical skills of personnel, the lack of equipment for efficient response to the plight of the victims and the high turnover rate of some law enforcement officials, who leave their duty stations before they are able to use their acquired knowledge.

In Darfur, gender-based violence continues to be reported even as progress is made to move from a conflict phase to a recovery-and-development phase. In this transition period, and as a key priority of its mandate to protect civilians, the African Union - United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is providing support to the Government of Sudan in seeking to eradicate violence against women and children.

UNAMID's efforts and the relentless advocacy of the international

community have resulted in Darfur's first Family and Child Protection Unit (FCPU), a gender-sensitive and women-friendly police operation that addresses cases related to women and children. The first FCPU was opened in El Geneina, West Darfur, in 2008 by the Government of Sudan with the support of UNAMID and the United Nations Children's Fund.

Since 2008, the FCPU has become

**UNAMID's efforts and the relentless advocacy of the international community have resulted in Darfur's first Family and Child Protection Unit (FCPU), a gender-sensitive and women-friendly police operation that addresses cases related to women and children.**

a platform for joint activities between UNAMID, UN Agencies and Sudanese Police. The Unit has appointed women social workers and has trained officers specifically to investigate and deal with sensitive cases. FCPU relies on a programmatic strategy that offers direct access to medical services and legal redress for victims. FCPU officers do not regularly wear uniforms; instead, they are more often in civilian clothes to add to the openness and friendliness of the Unit.

Far from being a pro forma or perfunctory outfit, the Unit not only is dedicated to its mission but also is expanding in terms of personnel and skillsets. Currently, several women social workers

are being trained to provide psychosocial support to victims, and the Unit's three women investigating assistants are undergoing special training.

Plans for additional expansion include opening four new help desks in different localities—specifically Foro Baranga, Habila, Kulbus and Jebel Mun—in an attempt to bring the Unit's services closer to the rural population. Meanwhile, UNAMID's Human Rights section

has been working closely with FCPU and has held workshops that cover topics ranging from pre-trial rights and treatment of detainees to principles for juvenile justice and techniques for monitoring and documenting.

There is more work to be done. The Unit is gradually gaining the trust of El Geneina's population, and it is registering an increasing number of complaints for investigation and action. As FCPU continues to evolve in its capacity to address some of the cases of gender-based violence and violence against children, and especially in its ability to foster an open and trusting environment that encourages reporting, it is quickly becoming a success story for human rights and for capacity- and institution-building. FCPU shows what is possible when multiple organizations focus on common goals. ■

CHRISTIAN S. MIKALA, BASED IN EL GENEINA, SUDAN, WORKS FOR UNAMID AS SECTOR WEST'S REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TEAM LEADER. CONTACT HIM AT MIKALAC@UN.ORG.

## Reactivating Traditional Justice Mechanisms

Across Darfur, in remote areas far removed from the government's court system, traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms are making a comeback.

BY EMADELDIN ALI RIJAL

Through a series of meetings, representatives of the African Union - United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) have been working with local communities to revitalize Darfur's traditional mechanisms for resolving conflict, and in doing so, help Darfuris solve local problems more efficiently than they would otherwise be able to do through the court system.

For centuries, Darfur, like other parts of Sudan, has known *Judyia* and *Ajaweed* as interdependent social mechanisms for resolving disputes that arise in and among communities. While such mechanisms are now seen by legal experts to have fallen short in functioning effectively to settle certain kinds of differences, recently some 1,000 people across Darfur have taken part in a series of workshops that are highlighting the strengths of these traditional strategies.

Participants at the workshops have received training not only on the background, importance and methodology of *Judyia* and *Ajaweed*, but also on communications and negotiations skills. "Such workshops will help raise the community's awareness of the importance of traditional approaches to conflict resolution and help facilitate ways of settling disputes," says Adam Ismaeil Abbaker, Sheikh of the Ardamata camp for internally displaced persons in West Darfur.

*Judyia*, a Sudanese term, indicates the framework for settling differences through local institutions rather than through the country's courts. An *Ajaweed*, then, is the group of people acting



*A man from the Kassab camp in Kutum, North Darfur, 19 January 2012. More than 25,000 IDPs live in the camp. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

as the mediators between the quarreling or disputing parties. An *Ajaweed* consists of people in a high social position who are expected to treat each dispute impartially. Communities typically accord an *Ajaweed* panel a great deal of respect.

"*Judyia* and *Ajaweed* are among the best, most useful and most effective methods of eradicating disputes,

wiping out hostilities and inspiring peace and tranquility among people," says Abdurrahman Yagub, North Darfur's Chief Prosecutor, explaining that these traditional mechanisms can be much more efficient and timely than the court system.

Mr. Yagub points out that plaintiffs and defendants in the *Judyia* system



*Sheiks in the Monrei camp near El Geneina, West Darfur, 22 August 2010. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

usually willingly accept and are satisfied with an Ajaweed decision. Moreover, according to Mr. Yagub, the traditional mechanisms for resolving disputes have been especially relevant in remote areas where there is a vacuum in the system of justice and the rule of law.

However, despite what appear to be distinct advantages of traditional justice mechanisms over the government's courts, Mr. Yagub explains that some

**“Judya and Ajaweed are among the best, most useful and most effective methods of eradicating disputes, wiping out hostilities and inspiring peace and tranquility among people.”**

**—Abdurrahman Yagub**

Ajaweed decisions are not followed, leading to a breakdown in what would otherwise be a peaceful end to a dispute. This problem is compounded by the fact that certain segments of Darfur society have been revolting against social norms, weakening the power of the traditional civil structures.

Academics, such as Dr. Yousuf Khamees Abu Faris, a professor at

the Africa International University in Khartoum, have attributed the failure of Judya in addressing Darfur's current problems to the evolving reality of Ajaweed's role in settling disputes impartially. Critics of the system argue that Ajaweeds are being transformed into a mechanism that serves the interest of the governing authorities rather than the people. This transformation, or even the perception of it, has cost

Judya its status as a credible and influential framework for resolving community conflict.

“The emerging conflict in Darfur led to a disintegration and deterioration in the inherited smooth native administration system,” says Abdulwahab Mousa Ali, a UNAMID Political Affairs Officer. Mr. Ali explains that the deterioration in the system has given authori-

ties an opportunity to play a larger role in steering Judya proceedings.

Despite these apparent downsides, Mr. Yagub says that Judya may still serve as a viable mechanism for settling family or tribal differences in Darfur, especially in remote areas that do not have easy access to the government's court system.

The people of Darfur, for many years, have relied on Judya as a mechanism to resolve conflicts between individuals, family members, groups and tribes. While its status as a mechanism for resolving conflict and dispensing justice has come into question recently, many Darfuris see the framework as the most effective method for knitting together the diverse social tapestries of Darfur's communities.

UNAMID's Civil Affairs officers are planning to conduct additional conflict-resolution workshops across Darfur, with the goal being to enhance the judicial capabilities of Darfur's communities. “We do increase the capacity of the native administration leaders in applying Judya to resolve disputes among communities,” says Civil Affairs Officer Ana Maria Valerio. ■



Designer Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh using a wooden ring, called a tara, to hold fabric tightly as she paints it. The paints Dr. Saleh uses are specially made for cloth. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## Salwa Mukhtar Saleh on Designing Sudanese Thobes

In a seven-day thobe exhibition in El Fasher, North Darfur, a local designer displays her work, which is influenced by both traditional and contemporary Sudanese fashion.

BY ALA MAYYAH

To display more than 50 Sudanese thobes made of fine fabrics and designed in both contemporary and traditional styles, Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh, a Darfuri fashion designer, held an exhibition in early May in the Cultural Centre in El Fasher, North Darfur. During the seven days of the exhibition, the show's

visitors were able to view a variety of new and old styles, all designed by Dr. Saleh.

In addition to being a designer, Dr. Saleh is an academic holding a Masters in educational media and a Doctorate in educational development. She has lectured at El Fasher University since 1995, and is a high-profile woman in her hometown,

El Fasher, maintaining ties with her family and community.

In an interview, *Voices of Darfur* spoke with Dr. Saleh about her exhibition, the second such show she has put on, and about the cultural and social factors that have contributed to the modern-day Sudanese thobe.

**VoD:** Can you tell us about your start in designing thobes and how you learned to paint on fabric?

**Salwa:** It goes back to my early age, as I grew up in a family that always appreciated art. Since my childhood, I've been used to seeing female family members making nice arrangements and colouring, which gave me a keen sense for art.

As for learning, it was by natural talent first, as well as the desire to improve my art skills. Then my academic education helped me greatly refine my skills. I

studied industrial design at the University of Sudan for Science and Technology. There I learned colouring principles and engineering drawing. I also took courses in human anatomy in the Medicine College, carpentry and blacksmithing in the Engineering College, and packaging in the College of Commerce.

All these subjects are art-related and contributed significantly to mastering the skills needed for working on different materials, including fabrics and clothing.

**VoD: How long did it take to prepare for this exhibition, and what was the biggest challenge you faced?**

**Salwa:** It took me nearly six months. Managing time was the only challenge I faced, but it put me under enormous pressure, as additionally I have administrative and academic responsibilities at

the University of El Fasher, in addition to my commitments with the family and the community.

**VoD: Do you have assistants help you in the drawings or in the preparations for the exhibition?**

**Salwa:** No, actually I did all the work by myself, including preparations for the exhibition.

**VoD: How is this exhibition different from the first one?**

**Salwa:** The first exhibition, held in May 2011, consisted of 42 thobes that were displayed through models. In this one, I had 52 thobes in new designs exhibited on walls and manikins. Also, the first one was a show for a few hours. This exhibition lasted for seven days, which provided a better opportunity for a larger audience to see my collection.

**VoD: You presented both contemporary and traditional designs. Which style is more liked by Darfuri women?**

**Salwa:** All the designs were liked by women who came to the exhibition, as I combined both contemporary and traditional styles using fabrics with inlaid accessories and various colours and patterns.

**VoD: Are thobes different from one area to another in Sudan, in terms of designs and the way of wearing the thobe?**

**Salwa:** No. The thobe is the only element in our culture shared by all women of Sudan, in all the states and tribes, and at all levels and ages.

**VoD: But the Sudanese thobe is different from the Islamic dress code for women in the Arab countries, so**

*A Sudanese woman in a traditional thobe made of chiffon and inlaid with shiny material, called glitter in Arabic, and small crystals. The thobe is designed by Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh. Photo by Kirk L. Kroeker, UNAMID.*



“The thobe is the only element in our culture shared by all women of Sudan, in all the states and tribes, and at all levels and ages.”

—Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh

**what are the historic or social factors that contributed to shaping the local thobe?**

**Salwa:** The Sudanese thobe was originally inspired by the African dress back in the mid-19th century, in 1858. We see women in some African countries, such as Mauretania, Chad and Nigeria, wearing a thobe but the designs and colours differ from one country to another as the culture differs as well.

Also, in the beginning, the Sudanese thobe was made of locally manufactured cotton yarn (those fabrics are called Alferdah, Alguenjah and Alzuraq), but with time, and as imported fabrics were brought to the local markets, women started using, and preferring, those imported fabrics because of their good quality.

**VoD: Does the family encourage your work in this line?**

**Salwa:** Yes. Actually I find great encouragement from my family and others in our society, which gives me moral support to continue working in this art field.

**VoD: What would you like to achieve in the future?**

**Salwa:** I hope my project of designing thobes will expand to establish a workshop for training women and to increase production capacity to export the Sudanese thobes abroad.

**VoD: Being also a lecturer at the University of El Fasher, and a wife and a mother, how do you manage your time?**

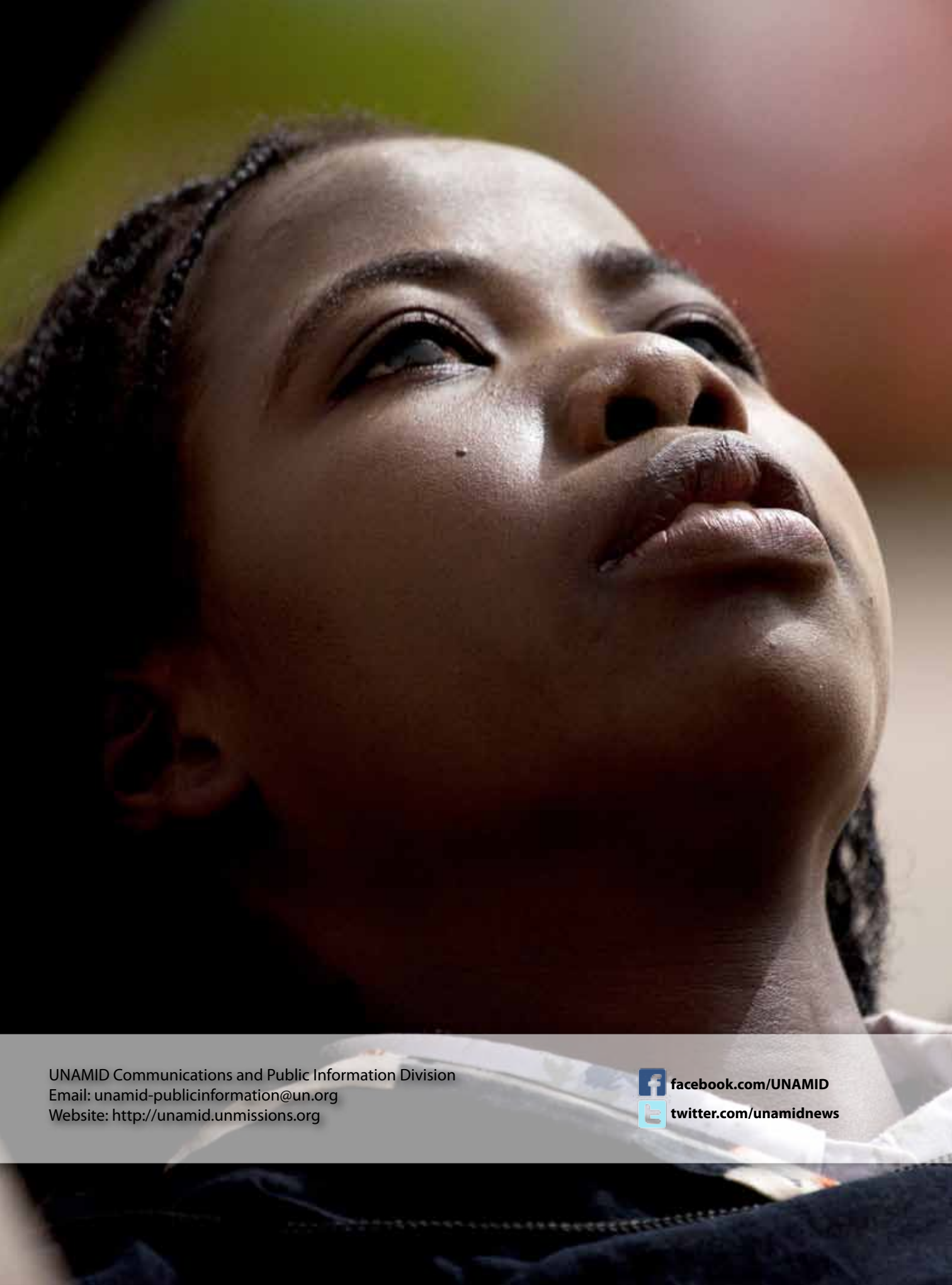
**Salwa:** I usually complete my office and academic work during working hours at the university, and I give what's left of my time to my family, to my art work and to social commitments. ■

*A close-up photo of several thobes from Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh's collection exhibited at the El Fasher Cultural Centre, North Darfur, on 10 May 2012. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.*



*A Sudanese woman in a traditional thobe made of chiffon and accessorized with shiny material stitched on the fabric. The thobe is designed by Dr. Salwa Mukhtar Saleh. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*





UNAMID Communications and Public Information Division  
Email: [unamid-publicinformation@un.org](mailto:unamid-publicinformation@un.org)  
Website: <http://unamid.unmissions.org>

 [facebook.com/UNAMID](https://facebook.com/UNAMID)  
 [twitter.com/unamidnews](https://twitter.com/unamidnews)