

UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur

# VOICES

of Darfur

MAY 2013

## Ephemeral Craft:

An Interview with Henna Artist Fatima Mohamed

**Building Peace in Darfur's Communities**

*Community projects to cultivate job skills*

**A Medial Clinic for the People of Darfur**

*Kabkabiya hospital reaches out to locals*

**Ending the Use of Darfur's Child Soldiers**

*Child Protection Chief writes on progress*



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MISSION IN DARFUR  
(UNAMID)





*On 30 March 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, henna artist Fatima Mohamed prepares the henna ingredients for a client. After preparing the henna mixture and pouring the paste in a bag, the henna is applied to the skin where it must stay for one to two hours to set in. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm pleased to introduce the May 2013 issue of *Voices of Darfur*, which, like other recent issues of *Voices*, contains news, features and interviews not only about unique aspects of life in Darfur but also about UNAMID's ongoing efforts to facilitate lasting peace in the region.

In "Building Peace in Darfur's Communities," Ms. Caterina Violante offers an in-depth look at how UNAMID's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) section is implementing strategies designed to reduce violence and increase the number of vocational opportunities for young people. Because there is no all-inclusive peace agreement in Darfur, UNAMID's DDR efforts are focusing on community-oriented programmes designed to set the stage for formal DDR activities by fostering trust at local levels and helping move the peace process steadily forward.

In the viewpoint published in this issue, Mr. Boubacar Dieng, Chief of UNAMID's Child Protection section, outlines how the Mission has been working directly with armed groups in Darfur to eliminate the use of child soldiers. He argues that, while there is much evidence to indicate a groundswell of change has been steadily gathering momentum to end the use of child soldiers here, much more work remains to be done.

In "Toward Equitable Access to Water," Mr. Abdullahi Shuaibu and Ms. Sharon Lukunka write about how the Mission has been working with its partners to address the pressing issue of Darfur's water resources, which have been regularly cited as one of the root causes of the conflict here.

In "Solidarity Market: WFP's New Food

System," Mr. Albert González Farran presents a photo essay designed to highlight the agency's new voucher method that is said to offer several advantages over distributing food by truck. Because the new system is community-based, it sidesteps some of the logistics challenges associated with truck distribution. In the process, WFP officials say, the voucher system is stimulating local economies and supporting local farmers.

In "A Medical Clinic for the People," Mr. Shuaibu writes about UNAMID's Level 2 Hospital in Kabkabiya, the purpose of which is to provide medical services not only to the Mission's peacekeepers, but also to members of the local community. Since its inception, the hospital has been providing emergency, primary, pharmaceutical and dental services. More than 70 per cent of the hospital's patients are Darfuris from in and around Kabkabiya.

In "Local Mediation to End Tribal Disputes," Ms. Lukunka offers an overview of recent work undertaken by UNAMID in support of local mediation programmes designed to end the ongoing hostilities between tribes across Darfur.

Finally, in our cover feature, "Ephemeral Craft," Ms. Ala Mayyahi interviews henna artist Fatima Mohamed about her work in a temporary art form that has long been used to enhance personal style. In the conflict-torn region of Darfur, the craft is serving to bring people closer together.

As *Voices of Darfur* continues to evolve as a news magazine, we welcome your feedback. To send comments by email, please 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).

**Kirk L. Kroeker**  
Head of Publications

## ON THE COVER



On 27 April 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, acclaimed henna artist Fatima Mohamed, known to her friends and clients as Tata, is pictured in her home. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 19 March 2013 in the Abu Shouk camp for displaced people in North Darfur, Ms. Kariya Mohamed Abbakar gives water to one of her young relatives. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

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## UNAMID Delivers Aid to East Darfur Displaced

BY CHRIS CYCMANICK

**U**NAMID and its humanitarian partners delivered nearly 80,000 kilograms of critical humanitarian aid to thousands of displaced civilians in Labado and Muhajerja, East Darfur.

The first phase of the operation, conducted on 23 April 2013, consisted primarily of delivering food rations, bottled water and medical supplies. UNAMID delivered the humanitarian aid, provided by the UN Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization, by road. The Mission conducted the second phase of the operation on 29 April.

The humanitarian situation in the area emerged early in April as a result of clashes between the Sudan Liberation Army - Minni Minnawi and the



*On 23 April 2013, UNAMID and its humanitarian partners delivered nearly 80,000 kilograms of humanitarian aid to thousands of displaced civilians in Labado and Muhajerja, East Darfur. Photo by Safwat Mutaal, UNAMID.*

Government of Sudan. Following the conflict, an estimated 20,000 displaced people gathered around the Mission's team sites in Labado and Muhajerja.

"Access remains a priority and we are pleased that this aid has made it to the people," said UNAMID Joint Special Representa-

tive Mohamed Ibn Chambas. "UNAMID and its UN Country Team partners will continue to ensure we reach those most in need." ■

## UNAMID Head Visits Darfur's States to Assess Security and Civilian Needs

BY CHRIS CYCMANICK

**T**he head of UNAMID, Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas, focused on the security, humanitarian and political situation in a series of field visits across Darfur. Dr. Chambas, who travelled to Darfur's five States of North, South, East, Central and West Darfur during the period of 22 to 30 April 2013, met with representatives of internally displaced persons (IDPs), traditional leaders, and local authorities, along with UNAMID staff.

In Shangil Tobaya, North Darfur, the first of his visits, the JSR met with leaders of the Shadad and Niyasha IDP camps. In South Darfur, Dr.

Chambas went to the Kalma IDP camp where he reassured the residents there of the Mission's commitment to protect civilians. Prior to the meeting, the UNAMID chief met with South Darfur Governor (Wali) Adam Mahmoud Jaral-Nabi.

The JSR's next stop was in East Darfur, where he met with Wali Abdulhamid Musa Kasha to express his gratitude for the cooperation shown to UNAMID and its UN Country Team partners in the delivery of humanitarian aid to Labado and Muhajerja.

In Zalingei, Central Darfur, the JSR met with leaders of the Hassahissa IDP Camp to listen to their concerns and to high-



*On 22 April 2013 in North Darfur, UNAMID JSR Mohamed Ibn Chambas speaks in Shangil Tobaya in the first of his visits to various locations in Darfur's five states. Photo by Sharon Lukunka, UNAMID.*

light the benefits of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur as a step forward toward achieving lasting peace. The JSR's travel concluded in El Geneina,

West Darfur. The visits to Darfur's regions were Dr. Chambas' first in his official capacity as UNMAID JSR, a post he assumed on 1 April 2013. ■

## IDPs, Refugees Discuss Return and Resettlement

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

More than 400 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from across Darfur, as well as refugees living in neighbouring countries, came together for a two-day conference in Nyala, South Darfur, to discuss several pressing issues, including return and resettlement. The forum, which concluded on 26 March 2013, was organized within the framework of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), which stipulates that all stakeholders in the Darfur peace process be able to share their views and contribute to that process.

Participants presented proposals on a host of issues, including voluntary return and resettlement; peace and security; compensation, reparation and restitution for property; land rights, natural resources and nomadic routes; humanitarian aid; and the rights of

women and children. Addressing the conference, Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) Chairperson Tijani Seisi identified voluntary returns as a top priority of the DRA. Urging people to spread values of cohesion and tolerance, he noted that tribal clashes only serve to destabilize peaceful coexistence and the social fabric of Darfur's communities.

Mr. Mohamed B. Yonis, UNAMID's Deputy Joint Special Representative (Operations and Management), stated that the continued displacement of people in Darfur breeds human suffering and impedes development. He noted that the conference is important because it brings together key stakeholders to map out a strategy to facilitate the return and resettlement of those displaced.

The forum resulted in agreement by the attending



On 26 March 2013 in Nyala, South Darfur, more than 400 internally displaced people from across Darfur, as well as refugees living in neighbouring countries, came together for a two-day conference to discuss several pressing issues, including return and resettlement. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

IDPs and refugees on several recommendations, including the formation of a committee to follow the implementation of the recommendations in partnership with the DRA's Voluntary Return and Resettlement Commission.

Other stakeholders taking part in the event included representatives of civil society groups, native administrations, nongovernmental organizations, the Sudanese Government, United Nations agencies and UNAMID. ■

## El Fasher, North Darfur



On 23 March 2013, new university graduates take part in a celebratory procession that culminates in the graduates signing a pledge to work conscientiously at all times for the realization of sustainable peace. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.



## Doha, Qatar



*On 8 April 2013, UNAMID JSR Mohamed Ibn Chambas speaks to attendees at the Donors Conference for Reconstruction and Development in Darfur, which raised billions of dollars in pledges for Darfur's recovery. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

## Darfur Celebrates International Women's Day

BY EMADELDIN RIJAL



*On 11 March 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, more than 500 men, women and children march to celebrate International Women's Day. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

In March 2013, across Darfur, UNAMID commemorated International Women's Day with several events and activities conducted in partnership with UN agencies, the Government of Sudan, local organizations and members of the Darfuri community.

In El Fasher, North Dar-

fur, Women's Day was celebrated under the theme "Together to Promote the Dignity of Women and Girls." Hundreds of men, women and children, including internally displaced people and Government dignitaries, took part in the ceremony during which music was played by a band and a sketch

was performed by a theatrical group to highlight the challenges faced by women.

"We protect, empower and involve women in different fields," said the Wali (Governor) of North Darfur, Osman Mohammed Yousif Kibir, in a speech delivered at the event. He noted that celebrating Women's Day has become part of Darfur's local heritage.

The North Darfur State Minister of Social Affairs, Mr. Khalil Abdullah Adam, drew attention to the establishment of the State's Family and Child Protection Unit, the Juvenile Court and the Prosecution Office for those affected by gender-based violence. "The government has taken practical steps forward in the protection of family and children," he said, noting that the Govern-

ment is striving to empower women through several new programmes.

Mr. Djibril Ly, Chief of UNAMID's Rule of Law section, read UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for the day. "This year on International Women's Day, we convert our outrage into action," he said. "We declare that we will prosecute crimes against women—and never allow women to be subjected to punishments for the abuses they have suffered."

In many other parts of Darfur, Women's Day was celebrated with similar collaborative events to highlight the contributions of women in Darfur and address issues related to poverty, injustice, peace, security and sustainable development. ■

## Religious Leaders Unify Peace Messages

BY ALBERT GONZÁLEZ FARRAN



In March 2013, in North Darfur, Imams delivered unified peace messages at Friday sermons. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

In April 2013, for the first time, Imams across North Darfur delivered the same sermon about peace during Friday's prayers at mosques. This new peace initiative, facilitated by UNAMID's Civil Affairs section, is designed to cultivate a greater sense of the benefits of peace, as stipulated

by the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).

"In a region where more than 95 per cent of the population is Muslim, all under an Imam's guardianship for their spiritual needs, people will listen to a unified peace message," says UNAMID Civil Affairs Officer Mariama Dauda, who notes that, in the coming months, more than 700 Imams across North Darfur will be spreading the same message in their Friday sermons.

In several meetings held in early 2013, UNAMID's Civil Affairs Officers worked with religious leaders in North Darfur on the details of the sermon, which not only includes an appeal to regional peace, but also an invitation for peaceful

behaviour in daily life.

The Imams who participated in the meetings, which were held at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur, all agreed that Friday prayers would be an effective method to reach out to the population with messages of peace and to raise awareness about the benefits of the DDPD.

The Ministry of Religion in North Darfur has indicated its support for the involvement of Imams in political and social matters. "We need to assure people about the relevance of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur through our religious sources and through the lessons from the Koran," says Minister Al-taib Ahmed Juma. ■

### El Fasher, North Darfur



On 2 April 2013, Suleiman Fatul Saim, age 10, poses for a photo in the Dar Al Salam camp for internally displaced people. Mr. Saim suffered burns to more than 90 per cent of his body when his brother detonated a device that he found near their house. One of their friends was killed in the incident. International Day of Mine Awareness is marked every year on 4 April. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



## Al Koma, North Darfur



On 14 March 2013, a woman dances to celebrate International Women's Day in an event facilitated by UNAMID. Women leaders from across North Darfur attended the event, which featured nomadic songs and dances. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## UNAMID Conducts Gender Workshop on Land Use

BY EMADEL DIN RIJAL

On 5 March 2013, in an effort to enhance gender awareness related to land use policy in Darfur, UNAMID hosted 40 Sudanese officials and community leaders in a two-day workshop held in El Fasher, North Darfur. UNAMID's Gender Advisory Unit collaborated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the North Darfur Committee for Security Council Resolution 1325 to conduct the workshop with the goal of strengthening awareness about gender-sensitive land policies and programmes.

In opening remarks, Ms. Yegerawork Angagaw, UNAMID's Chief Gender Advisor, noted that the purpose of the workshop is to enhance awareness about gender as it

relates to the access, control and use of land. "It is important for gender considerations to be integrated into land-use policies and administrative responsibilities," she said, pointing out that land issues have been one of the root causes of Darfur's conflict.

During the workshop, the participants received briefings on gender concepts and several United Nations programmes and policies, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Workshop participants also received a briefing on the Darfur Regional Authority's Land Commission, which was established in accordance with the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and serves as a mechanism for resolving disputes

over natural resources.

At various points in the two-day meeting, workshop participants brainstormed on ways to

address disputes over land in Darfur, including through social practices and traditional justice mechanisms. ■



On 4 March 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, workshop participants listen to presentations designed to cultivate skills in formulating gender-sensitive land policies. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

# COMMUNITY

## Building Peace in Darfur's Communities

To support peace efforts in Darfur at the community level, UNAMID's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) section has been implementing strategies designed to reduce violence and increase vocational opportunities for young people.

BY CATERINA VIOLANTE



*On 29 April 2013 in the Althoura Shemal neighbourhood on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur, a community leader, Mr. Mohammed Khalil, celebrates an event with the men, women and children of Althoura Shemal in the completed community centre built in one of UNAMID's community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs). This building project, facilitated by UNAMID's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration section, provided vocational training to 80 young people—60 men and 20 women. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

In most peacekeeping operations, the process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) works within the framework of a comprehensive peace agreement to disarm combatants and help them find new life as valuable and contributing members of society. When there is no comprehensive peace agreement in place, as is the case in Darfur, DDR efforts focus on community-oriented programmes designed to set the stage for formal DDR activities,

fostering trust at local levels and supporting programmes to move the peace process steadily forward.

The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) has not yet been signed by all armed movements, making comprehensive DDR activities impossible. However, UNAMID's DDR section has been working through the framework of what has come to be known as second-generation DDR, which offers different strategy and policy options that rely

on unique approaches considered more effective for specific contexts. Rather than focusing on formal DDR activities, second-generation DDR takes a more organic approach in focusing on peace and security at the community level, and ensuring the involvement of these communities in the peace process.

As one part of this second-generation approach to support peace in Darfur at the community level, UNAMID's DDR section has been implementing



a violence-reduction strategy that has taken several forms in practice, most notably in community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs). These community projects are designed to support the efforts of the Government of Sudan in addressing the needs of at-risk youth and other vulnerable groups in communities and in camps for displaced people. The projects focus not only on building vocational skills, and in many cases facilitating infrastructure development, but also on fostering reconciliation across Darfur.

“Inequitable access to livelihood opportunities heightens tensions at the community level and fuels local conflict, especially in those communities that are receiving a large number of returnees,” says Mr. Aderemi Adekoya, Chief of UNAMID’s DDR section. “It is critically important to address the causes of the Darfur conflict through second-generation DDR to lay the foundation for what will come later when there is an all-inclusive peace agreement in place and formal DDR activities commence.”

Mr. Adekoya explains that, so far, the CLIPs conducted across Darfur are designed to address issues associated with large groups of at-risk young people who lack employment opportunities and thus may turn to armed movements or criminal behaviour to earn a living. “We estimate that the average number of young men and women who are unemployed in Darfur is upwards of 40 per cent,” he says.

The education system in Darfur, while steadily improving following years of conflict that damaged or destroyed basic infrastructure, does not yet have sufficient facilities or offer enough programmes to meet the needs of all the young Darfuris requiring vocational training beyond primary and secondary school. Competition over access to the services that are offered has been a source of tension that CLIPs are designed to address. Since the commencement of the programme



*On 15 August 2012 in Althoura Shemal, North Darfur, young men and woman work to build a community centre in one of UNAMID’s community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs). This project, facilitated by UNAMID’s Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration section, provided vocational training to 80 young people. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

**“Inequitable access to livelihood opportunities heightens tensions at the community level and fuels local conflict, especially in those communities that are receiving a large number of returnees.”**

**—Aderemi Adekoya**

in July 2012, DDR has implemented 17 CLIPs in 14 different localities throughout Darfur, engaging more than 2,300 young people.

Those working in the CLIPs projects are young men and women typically between 18 and 35 years old. Participation in the projects does not depend on political, movement or tribal affiliation; people with disabilities are encouraged to join in. The young people participating in the projects—which mostly consist of rebuilding community infrastructure that has been damaged or destroyed—acquire the kind of livelihood and life skills that will enhance their employability and social integration. In the process of acquiring these skills, the young people involved in these projects have been rebuilding the infrastructure of their fragile communities.

“We have focused the CLIPs programme in areas where a high rate of

unemployment and scarce community facilities have increased the levels of small-scale criminality and fostered social conflict and instability,” says Mr. Adekoya, citing as one example Althoura Shemal, a community located on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur. “The people of Althoura Shemal are enthusiastic about the new community centre built by 80 local young men and women,” he says. “During the course of this project, the participants developed new skills as masons, painters and electricians; more importantly, they learned how to work as a team.”

When interviewed at the beginning of the project, the community leader of Althoura Shemal, Sheik Ahmed Hashim Adam, pointed to the large numbers of unemployed young people in the area, and cited the need to train them for viable vocations. The locality’s religious leader, Imam Hamid Ahmad

## A Youth Revival to Reduce Violence

BY CATERINA VIOLANTE



*The Commissioner of Tawila, Mr. Adam Tahir, entering the new vocational centre built in one of UNAMID's community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs). Photo by Richard Feukeu, UNAMID.*

**T**awila, 60 kilometres north of El Fasher, used to be a prosperous town in North Darfur, with nearly 40,000 residents, many brick buildings and an extensive agricultural industry. In 2003, the town became a conflict hotspot. By 2004, the entire area had been looted and destroyed. Today, only fragments remain of the brick buildings that used to form the foundations of the many warehouses and residences in the area. To strengthen the prospects for peace in Tawila, and reduce the likelihood that the locality's young people will be drawn into the conflict, UNAMID's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) section identified Tawila as an ideal location for implement-

ing community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs).

"We are all willing to join in efforts to make a change that will bring peace and development to this community," says Mr. Abdulmagid Ibrahim, a youth leader who served as a key focal point for UNAMID's CLIPs programme in Tawila. Mr. Ibrahim was born in Tawila 30 years ago and has been living in the area his entire life. He is a farmer, as are most of the people from Tawila, but he identifies primarily as a youth leader devoted to advocating for the rights and wellbeing of the locality's young people.

In 2006, Mr. Ibrahim was nominated as the head of the Youth Union in Al Salam, one of the numerous camps for

internally displaced people in the area. For several years, he organized activities for the entertainment and informal education of the boys and girls of the camp. These activities included football matches, health screenings, dramas and comedies. Acknowledged for the efforts he made to improve the conditions of the young people living in the camp, he was selected by the youth of Tawila in 2012 to represent them across the whole locality.

As part of his role in facilitating youth-oriented projects, Mr. Ibrahim facilitated Tawila's CLIPs programme to build peace and stability in the violence-affected area and reach out to the young people who are at risk of recruitment by armed movements. Because of Mr. Ibrahim's assistance, UNAMID's DDR section was able to draw nearly 200 boys and girls from in and around Tawila for the CLIPs programme there.

The project, which consisted of building two community centres, provided an opportunity for the youth of Tawila to learn new vocational skills and, in the process, contribute to the reconstruction of Tawila's infrastructure. The project launched in Tawila in July 2012 and was

completed in December, after which the two new centres were officially inaugurated in the presence of several hundred community members and the locality's Commissioner, Mr. Adam Tahir.

In a speech, the Commissioner thanked those who made the project possible and indicated his intention to support such projects in the future by including them in the priorities of the locality's development plan. For his part, Mr. Ibrahim spoke during the inauguration and reminded everyone attending the ceremony that the project provided an opportunity for the young people of the area to make significant changes in their lives while helping to improve their vocational skills and employability.

"The trainees have the chance to transform the community with new job opportunities and career development potential," he said. "Overall, these projects will help steer the youth of Tawila away from violent action." Mr. Ibrahim also said that, now that many young people in the area have new skills, they can work on complementary projects, such as those that are focused on supplying power and electricity. ■

Mohammed, said he was happy to see the project come to Althoura Shemal so the young men and women of the area could work together and learn new skills. "This project is important because the young people used to sit at the roads or go out of the area to work, without learning anything," said Mr. Mohammed. "But now they will have an opportunity to learn."

While the profiles of CLIPs participants are diverse, the young workers all share a similar passion for acquiring new vocational skills and having a rewarding experience that will lead to potential new careers. Once the project ended, Ms. Huda Abdallah Mohamed, a 32-year-old who had never worked outside her home, began looking for a job immediately. "I learned from this project how to build and how to

work with other people," she says.

Mr. Mutawakil Mahmud, at age 18, landed a job immediately after finishing the CLIPs training in Althoura Shemal. "I didn't have anything to do before," he says. "Now that I learned many skills, I can be useful to the community."

Another participant, Ms. Nariman Abdallah Mohammed, says she will never forget the help received in the project.



“The young people need to work together to build a future,” she says.

Another example of a CLIPs project is the one undertaken in Tawila, a town 60 kilometres north of El Fasher. The area around the town is active with different armed movements, making the security situation unpredictable. Against this volatile backdrop, DDR launched a CLIPs project in the locality to help reduce conflict and strengthen the area’s social fabric by giving the young people of the area access to vocational training while building two community centres. Mr. Abdulmajid Ibrahim, a Tawila youth leader, facilitated the implementation of project, which involved 180 young men and women in on-the-job training for the construction of the two centres, one multipurpose and the other dedicated to vocational training.

“All the beneficiaries are glad to have participated in such an undertaking,” says Mr. Ibrahim. “The project promoted the young people and strengthened their identity; the youth of Tawila have been born now for real.”

The youth leader went on to say that the CLIPs generated social interaction and cohesion not only among the participating young people, but also across the community, and provided an opportunity for the young people of Tawila to make significant life changes. “The young are the future of the community,” he says. “Now it is in the hands of these young men and women, in collaboration with local authorities, community leaders and the associations to sustain these projects and continue building a better Tawila.”

In the upcoming months, UNAMID’s DDR section is scheduled to implement nearly one dozen more CLIPs across Darfur, linking the projects to violence-reduction programmes and other initiatives designed to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and an increasing number of ex-combatants. UNAMID’s DDR section has been working with UN Country Team counterparts to develop these unique initiatives, which combine CLIPs with community security and arms control (CSAC) interventions.

CSAC interventions typically rely on



On 7 October 2012 in Althoura Shemal, young men work to complete a community centre in one of UNAMID’s community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs). Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

**“It is critically important to address the causes of the Darfur conflict through second-generation DDR to lay the foundation for what will come later when there is an all-inclusive peace agreement in place and formal DDR activities commence.”**

**—Aderemi Adekoya**

sensitisation and training to strengthen local capacities for developing and sustaining peace. In one example of a CSAC project in Darfur, the DDR section of the United Nations Development Programme assisted the community of El Sereif, North Darfur, in managing the proliferation of small arms and improving community security through the creation of community security committees.

The joint CLIPs-CSAC initiatives are designed not only to reduce community violence and improve community security, but also to eliminate the conditions rebel groups need to lure young people into their ranks. “Through these joint initiatives, we are expecting to be able to promote sustainable economic growth and foster community stability and social cohesion,” says Mr. Adekoya, noting that the joint projects will be implemented in coordination with the Darfur Regional Authority, Sudan’s DDR Commission,

nongovernmental organizations and Darfur’s Government bodies.

The pilot projects, which will broadly involve Government authorities and civil society groups, are scheduled to be rolled out in Kulbus, West Darfur; Gereida, South Darfur; and Umdokhun, Central Darfur. Mr. Adekoya says he is hopeful that the upcoming CLIPs and the combined CLIPs-CSAC initiatives will help build peace at the community level and in this way directly contribute to Darfur-wide peace efforts.

“Despite the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement, we are seeing real benefits of such projects, particularly as they help young people turn from violence and rebuild their communities,” he says. “Without recourse to proper vocational training—a fundamental problem these programmes are designed to address—many young people continue to be drawn into the Darfur conflict in one way or another.” ■

## Toward Equitable Access to Water

While disputes over scarce water resources have been cited regularly as one of the root causes of the conflict in Darfur, UNAMID has been working to address this pressing issue.

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU AND SHARON LUKUNKA



On 26 March 2012 in Kutum, North Darfur, UNAMID peacekeeper Lt. Col. Martin Feni, Commander of UNAMID's South African contingent, helps a woman pump water at night in the Kassab camp for internally displaced people. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

The conflict in Darfur erupted more than a decade ago, claiming many lives and displacing hundreds of thousands of people. Disputes over scarce water resources, especially between farmers and nomads, have been cited regularly as one of the root causes of the conflict. Against this backdrop, a growing number of people internally displaced from tribal clashes and fighting between armed movements and Sudanese forces have increased pressure on Darfur's limited water resources.

The lack of access to water by Darfuris has drawn local, national and international attention, and eventually led

to an international water conference in June 2011. The conference focused on how the equitable use and management of the limited resource could help build peace in the troubled region.

The two-day conference, which was sponsored by the Government of Sudan, UNAMID and UN agencies, focused on Darfur's need for modern water resources. More than 300 Sudanese and international water experts, economists, development specialists and donors worked to develop new ideas for Darfur and, in the process, raised US\$1.5 billion in pledges to implement water projects designed to rebuild Darfur's water infrastructure devastated by

long years of conflict and neglect.

It was expected that new technologies and systems for managing water, preparing for drought and helping Darfur's farmers and nomads adapt to climate change would be implemented as part of the conference's outcomes. While many had high hopes for the conference, the pledged funding did not materialize and the innovative projects discussed at the conference were not implemented.

Today, the water situation has grown more complex, due not only to heavy droughts in recent years but also to desertification, which has made available potable water an increasingly scarce resource.





On 19 September 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID drills a water borehole to minimize conflict over water. So far, UNAMID has drilled more than 50 such boreholes across Darfur. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

It is now common for Darfur's people to walk long distances to fetch water, or wait in long lines at community water points to fill their containers. According to United Nations figures, the average person in the world's most developed nations typically uses 400 litres of water per day. But in Darfur, 400 litres of water each day is enough to sustain 20 people.

UNAMID's Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political), Ms. Aichatou Mindoudou, recently addressed a forum on Darfur water development. "We seriously believe that addressing water challenges will ensure peaceful coexistence, promote conflict resolution, lay a strong foundation for lasting peace and viable livelihoods, and promote early recovery in Darfur," she said.

To help ease the burden on Darfuris who don't have quick access to water points, UNAMID has been offering short-term assistance, either through direct distribution of water by peacekeepers on patrols or through other approaches, such as the handing out of rolling water containers. The containers, each of which holds 75 litres of water, are designed to help Darfuris transport



On 31 January 2011 in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur, women test a few of the 3,000 water rollers distributed by UNAMID to help ease the burden on water collection activities. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

**“Recognizing that lack of access to water is one of the major causes of the conflict in Darfur, the objective of UNAMID’s water source search programme is to minimize conflict over water resources and thereby contribute to the objective of the Mission’s mandate.”**

**—Emmanuel Mollel**

large amounts of water with little exertion. To date, UNAMID has distributed more than 3,000 water rollers.

Beyond short-term interventions, UNAMID has been implementing a systematic programme to address the water problem in Darfur on a larger scale. A key part of the programme is to drill water boreholes across the region. So far, UNAMID has drilled more than 50 such boreholes.

“Recognizing that lack of access to water is one of the major causes of the conflict in Darfur, the objective of UNAMID’s water source search programme is to minimize conflict over water resources and thereby contribute to the objective of the Mission’s mandate,” says Emmanuel Mollel, Chief of UNAMID’s Water and

Environmental Protection section.

Mr. Abdulatif Mohamed Hassan, a staff member working at the Water Corporation in El Fasher, North Darfur, explains that in order to mitigate conflict, build peace and sustain livelihoods in Darfur, hundreds more wells need to be drilled. “We need to construct more waterworks to treat the water for consumption, build hundreds of storage dams, extend several hundred kilometres of pipes and, most importantly, train many technicians and managers to handle water in the region,” he says.

Mr. Hassan expresses only guarded optimism about whether such achievements are feasible. “We need millions of dollars to ensure the possibility of such accomplishment and guarantee sustainable devel-



On 19 March 2013 in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people, Ms. Kariya Mohamed Abbakar arrives with containers full of water she fetched on her weekly trip to the nearest water point. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## A Long Way for a Drop of Water

BY ALBERT GONZÁLEZ FARRAN

**M**s. Kariya Mohamed Abbakar, a 50 year old woman originally from Jebel Saiey, North Darfur, pushes her wheelbarrow each week to the water point nearest where she lives in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people.

The water point is a long walk from her shelter in the camp where she has been living for the past 10 years. Because of the labour involved and the cost of the water, she and her family must limit their consumption of water to 80 litres each week.

Ms. Abbakar does the work without complaining but points to the difficulty of the weekly collection, and notes that it is taking a toll on her physically. She concedes she would like to have a water point that is closer to her home and that makes water available at lower prices.



On 19 March 2013 in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people, Ms. Kariya Mohamed Abbakar gives water to her granddaughter following her weekly trip to the nearest water point. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“My family needs twice as much water as we currently have,” she says, noting that summer is approaching in Darfur, signalling that the quality of water will get worse even as the prices will increase. ■

recaptured sewage water for greening.

“Water-saving devices have been installed on all UNAMID facilities at headquarters, sector offices and team sites across the region,” says Mr. Mollel. “We operate state-of-the-art sewage treatment plants to treat waste water to protect the environment and, more importantly for a water-scare Darfur, generate water that is used for flushing toilets, watering trees and doing construction, where fresh water would have otherwise been used.”

Another part of the Mission’s strategy to address water scarcity in the region is working on projects in partnership with financial institutions. One such initiative is with the African Development Bank, which launched water projects across Darfur in late 2012. The projects, funded through a grant from the bank’s African Water Facility, are designed to focus on developing better water infrastructure for nearly 20 Darfur towns and their neighbouring farming and nomadic communities.

Rather than merely strengthening physical water systems, the fund is designed to address the factors that have contributed to the inequitable distribution of water in Darfur, with the ultimate goal being to enhance the capacity of Darfur’s water management institutions so they can manage and deliver water and sanitation services more effectively. UNAMID facilitated the visits of the African Development Bank team to the region in 2012 and is supporting the projects as they roll out.

Meanwhile, UNAMID continues to champion water initiatives with its local partners to develop short-, medium- and long-term water projects, operating under the theory that adequately addressing access to water not only will promote peace and foster more cordial relations between the various ethnic groups in the region, but also will further ensure economic growth and development.

Mr. Ismail Abdurahman, who is a farmer living in the Abu Shouk camp for displaced people on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur, succinctly characterizes Darfur’s water issue. “Available water is not sufficient,” he says. “Our crops sometimes do not germinate or even grow well.” ■

opment in the region,” he concedes.

Another aspect of UNAMID’s water programme is to enhance Darfuris’ ability to harvest water by rehabilitating dams designed to store water during the rainy season. The Mission has rehabilitated many dams, most recently a South Darfur dam capable of storing 360 mil-

lion litres of water. The dam will be used by farmers and nomads in the area.

UNAMID’s efforts in this area are not merely outwardly directed. On UNAMID bases across Darfur, the Mission has been implementing many water-conservation methods, such as using high-efficiency toilets and other such devices, and reusing



## Ending the Use of Child Soldiers in Darfur

While there is much evidence to indicate a groundswell of change has been steadily gathering momentum to end the use of child soldiers completely in Darfur, much more work remains to be done.

BY BOUBACAR DIENG

Since UNAMID's inception, the Mission's Child Protection section has been working directly with armed groups and armed forces in Darfur to eliminate the use of child soldiers. While there is much evidence to indicate a groundswell of change has been steadily gathering momentum to end the use of child soldiers in Darfur, much more work remains to be done.

To date, four armed movements listed in the Secretary General's reports for recruitment and use of child soldiers have taken steps in compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions: Sudan Liberation Army - Free Will (SLA-FW); Sudan Liberation Army - Mother Wing (SLA-MW); Justice and Equality Movement - Peace Wing (JEM-PW); and Sudan Liberation Army - Historical Leadership (SLA-HL). These movements have established action plans indicating their commitment to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers, have taken measures to prevent further recruitment without hindering access to monitoring teams and have cooperated with Sudan's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (SDDRC).

SLA-FW formally submitted its action plan to the United Nations in June 2010 and filed a progress report in August 2010, confirming the submission to SDDRC of a list of former child soldiers. SLA-FW submitted its second and final progress reports in February and December 2011 on the implementation of the action plan. Similarly, JEM-PW submitted an action plan in December 2010 and filed a progress report in May 2011 after providing a list of former child soldiers to SDDRC. In October 2011, JEM-PW submitted its final progress report, confirming the registration

with SDDRC of child soldiers. In its final report, the movement indicated it would be converting to a political party, and that it had registered with SDDRC all the children associated with it.

SLA-MW submitted an action plan in August 2010, issued an order prohibiting recruitment and use of child soldiers and registered former child soldiers with SDDRC. Meanwhile, SLA-HL adopted an action plan in 2011 and in January 2013 identified and registered with SDDRC former child soldiers that the movement had earlier released. Currently, these four movements—SLA-FW, SLA-MW, JEM-PW and SLA-HL—are not militarily active parties to the conflict and there has been no evidence of new recruitment into their ranks.

Even though not listed in the Secretary General's reports on armed movements and forces using child soldiers, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), a signatory of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), adopted an action plan on child soldiers in May 2012 to prevent violations related to children in armed conflicts. In support of LJM's initiative, UNAMID has provided training on child rights and child protection to LJM commanders, combatants and supporters.

In January 2012, UNAMID engaged in discussions with JEM leadership, and met in Stadtschlaining, Austria, at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in July 2012, following which, in September 2012, the movement issued a command order to its members prohibiting the recruitment and use of child soldiers. In September 2012, the movement signed and established an action plan and later appointed a committee tasked with the plan's implementation.

In November 2012, UNAMID held a meeting in Kampala, Uganda, with Adul Wahid al Nur, chair of the Abdul Wahid faction of the Sudan Liberation Army to discuss the establishment of an action plan. The November 2012 meeting was a follow-up on UNAMID's visits to Jebel Marra, the stronghold of the movement, in 2010 and 2011, which resulted in the issuance of an order by the movement's lead commander, prohibiting the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Meanwhile, the Government of Sudan is considering the adoption of an action plan, which would apply to the Sudanese Armed Forces and affiliated groups, to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The Sudan Armed Forces Act of 2007 and the Sudan Child Act of 2010 criminalize recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Clearly, progress depends on developments such as these on the use of child soldiers in Darfur. Since 2009, more than 1,000 former child soldiers have been registered with SDDRC for reintegration. While these developments all support a certain measure of optimism about ending the use of child soldiers here, an end to the scourge of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict also depends on the collective will of the adults waging war to embrace peace and protect children. Certainly, there cannot be a bright future for peace in Darfur if the region's most vulnerable people—its children—are drawn into the conflict and continue to be socially detached and disenfranchised, having no choice in education or vocation other than combat. ■

BOUBACAR DIENG IS CHIEF OF UNAMID'S CHILD PROTECTION SECTION. SINCE 1999, MR. DIENG HAS WORKED WITH THE UN AND, SINCE 2005, HAS HEADED CHILD PROTECTION SECTIONS IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS.



On 10 December 2012 in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, a child from the local community is examined by a pediatrician who works as a medical professional in UNAMID's Level 2 Hospital. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## A Medical Clinic for the People

UNAMID's Hospital in Kabkabiya is staffed by a military contingent with the sole purpose of providing medical services not only to peacekeepers, but also to members of the local community.

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU

**M**r. Ishak Ahmad Mohamed, age 16, sustained a gunshot wound in his right arm while on his way to a village near Kabkabiya, about 100 kilometres from El Fasher, North Darfur. The injury was severe, breaking his elbow in a compound fracture that required immediate surgical intervention. His friends in the area took him immediately to receive medical attention at UNAMID's hospital in Kabkabiya, where he was treated at no cost.

"I thank the doctors and nurses for saving my life," he says. "It would have

been worse without the excellent treatment given to me."

UNAMID's Level 2 Hospital in Kabkabiya, known locally as the Mongolian hospital, was established on 29 March 2011, and is fully staffed by the Mongolian military contingent deployed to Darfur, with the sole purpose of providing medical services not only to peacekeepers, but also to members of the local community. Since its inception, the hospital has been providing emergency, primary, pharmaceutical and dental services along with

other forms of treatment. More than 70 per cent of the hospital's patients are Darfuris from around Kabkabiya.

"Mongolia decided in 2010 to set up the hospital in Darfur to offer humanitarian services to the communities affected by the conflict," says the hospital's Chief Medical Officer, Maj. Natsagdorj Batgombo. "This is the first Mongolian hospital built outside of Mongolia, and also the first by Mongolian peacekeepers in a peace operation."

Local beneficiaries of the Mongolian hospital's medical services include infants,





On 9 December 2012 in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, members of the medical team posted at UNAMID's Hospital practice operational procedures. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 10 December 2012 in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, men, women and children wait their turn to be seen by doctors at UNAMID's Level 2 Hospital. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

the elderly, and everybody in between. Many locals visit the hospital each day to seek medical attention for various diseases. One of them is Ms. Halima Ahmed, a mother of two. "The hospital is a blessing to us and we are grateful for the medical care," she says. "My boys receive treatment in the hospital whenever they are sick."

Ms. Ahmed says that before the establishment of the hospital, she would take her children to the health clinic in Kabkabiya, which is a 15 kilometre walk from her village. "The health clinic has no

drugs to treat us properly for malaria or different diseases," she says.

Another patient at the hospital is Ms. Elhadi Idrissa, who was admitted to the hospital for typhoid. She commended the Mongolian contingent for its assistance to her. "During the treatment and admission, the nurses took good care of me and also conducted tests and gave me medications and injections, which helped me fully recover and feel better," she says.

The hospital is staffed with nearly 70 military officers and support person-

**"The hospital's medical aid is helping the communities where basic health care is inaccessible. In particular, it is saving the lives of women and children, who are the most vulnerable in society."**

**— Ameerah Haq**

nel from the Mongolian Armed Forces. There are receptionists, radiologists, laboratory attendants, pharmacists, and intensive-care and in-patient personnel. In addition, there are air evacuation teams and armed protection squads. Altogether, the hospital has 18 nurses and 16 doctors, including two dentists, one paediatrician, one cardiologist, three surgeons and one anaesthesiologist.

Since the deployment of the Mongolian peacekeepers, there have been three rotations of the troops stationed at the hospital. Each contingent spends nine months in Darfur, providing medical support and helping to increase the hospital's capacity to meet the needs of those seeking aid. During its two years of operation, its services have evolved significantly with the provision of high-tech equipment, including ultrasound and X-ray machines, and other modern medical gadgets. So far, more than 12,000 patients, including about 3,000 UNAMID peacekeepers and more than 8,000 Darfuris, have been treated.

In addition to providing emergency medical services, the hospital maintains in-patient wards so those who have had surgery or other health-related problems can be closely monitored. "We usually have patients who travel from as far as El Fasher or other major towns in Darfur to receive medical attention," says Capt. Bayarsaikhan Vanchinsuren, a surgical specialist at the hospital, noting that the



On 10 December 2012 in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, a woman receives free medication from a nurse who works on the staff of UNAMID's Level 2 Hospital. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 10 December 2012 in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, a patient is treated at UNAMID's Level 2 Hospital for a wound he sustained in his right arm. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

doctors have performed more than 20 major surgeries in the past year alone.

A nurse at the hospital, Sgt. Sumya Nayantsetesg, explains that, to support the hospital's operations, the laboratory is fully equipped to provide a wide range of tests, including blood biochemistry, urinalysis, myoglobin and other tests that not only can help determine the extent of infections but also can help build medical history for community patients so they can be treated more effectively in future visits.

One patient, Mr. Adam Osman from

Jebel Amir, North Darfur, has frequented the hospital for medical check-ups due to persistent abdominal pains. "I am happy with the presence of the hospital because my stomach problem is now receiving adequate attention," he says. "I am treated very well by the doctors and nurses here."

Mr. Osman points out that, because of the hospital in the area, his entire community is now getting good medical care. "This hospital contributes to the wellbeing of our people," he says.

To accommodate additional demand,

the personnel at the hospital are currently implementing a quick-impact project to increase the number of Darfuris the hospital can treat each day. Maj. Batgombo points out that the project is designed to help the peacekeepers reach out to Darfuri doctors with training sessions and the provision of medical supplies. "We are proud we are providing services that will make change for the people," he says. "We get satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment from this work."

The hospital's services are coming at a time in Darfur's history when, after long years of conflict during which clinics and other medical facilities had been damaged or destroyed, an overstretched medical system has not been able to meet the needs of its clients successfully. Long lines are common at Darfur's state-run hospitals and local clinics. Darfur's medical supplies and its personnel have not been able to accommodate an increasing number of patients caught in the violent conflict.

Moreover, during the past several years, the hospitals in the largest cities in Darfur have been dealing with an increasing number of patients who have fled conflicts in their home localities or have settled in nearby camps for the internally displaced. To respond to the increased demand for services, hospital administrators actively seek donors and compete for humanitarian projects to supplement their limited budgets.

In this context, the Level 2 Hospital is helping to ease the burden on Darfur's infrastructure. "It is our hope that, eventually, affordable medical services will be available for all Darfuris because they have suffered enough from conflict, poverty and severe health challenges, and they need to maintain their health to enable them to engage in meaningful social and economic activities," says Maj. Batgombo.

In November 2012, the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support, Ms. Ameerah Haq, visited the hospital during a tour of UNAMID's field offices across Darfur. She praised the doctors and nurses for providing "first class" medical services to Darfuris. "The hospital's medical aid is helping the communities where basic health care is inaccessible," she said. "In particular, it is saving the lives of women and children, who are the most vulnerable in society." ■



## Local Mediation to End Tribal Disputes

Even with a signed ceasefire agreement in place, conflict between tribes in North Darfur has continued. UNAMID's Civil Affairs section has been working to support local mediation activities designed to end the ongoing hostilities.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA



*On 13 January 2013 in Saraf Omra, North Darfur, a displaced man displays a chunk of gold from the Jebel Amir mine. In early January 2013, due to a dispute over the ownership of the gold mine, clashes between the Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes in the area led to an estimated 100 deaths and 100,000 people displaced. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.*

**I**n early January 2013, due to a dispute over the ownership of a gold mine that had become important to the local economy of the Jebel Amir area of North Darfur, clashes between the Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes in the area led to an estimated 100 deaths and 100,000 displaced. The fighting erupted on 5 January and resulted not only in casualties, but also in the looting and burning of nearby villages, forcing thousands of civilians to flee southward toward the villages of Kabkabiya, Saraf Omra, and El Sereif.

On 7 January, UNAMID dispatched a verification patrol to Jebel Amir and met with the Governor (Wali) of North

Darfur to discuss ways to support mediation and reconciliation efforts to bring the disputing tribes to the negotiating table. From 17 to 22 January, UNAMID delivered more than 56,000 kilograms of humanitarian aid, by land and air, to thousands of civilians who were displaced. The aid consisted of nonfood items such as plastic tarps, sleeping mats, blankets and water-purification equipment.

UNAMID strengthened its protection presence in the area by increasing its number of daily patrols, and continued its mediation work to bring about a peaceful solution to the tribal feud. The negotiations between the Abbala and Beni Hus-

sein communities led to an initial ceasefire agreement signed on 18 January in Saraf Omra. However, as mediation efforts began to move forward, the fighting in North Darfur resumed, resulting in additional casualties and displacements.

On 24 February, UNAMID airlifted 37 wounded civilians, including one woman and two children, from the El Sereif locality to El Fasher for medical treatment. As part of its support to the civilians caught in the conflict, the Mission transported 2,700 kilograms of medical and other supplies to El Sereif.

Recognizing that the conflict was not abating, even with a signed ceasefire



From 17 to 22 January, in addition to supporting mediation activities, UNAMID delivered more than 56,000 kilograms of humanitarian aid, by land and air, to thousands of civilians who were displaced in the Jebel Amir tribal clashes. The aid consisted of nonfood items such as plastic tarps, sleeping mats, blankets and water-purification equipment. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

**“Because some of the root causes of the local-level conflicts include access to water points, land ownership and natural resources, our workshops have specifically focused on mediation related to these topics.”**

**— Retta Reddy**

agreement, UNAMID’s Civil Affairs section began worked closely with Government representatives and the two disputing tribes to address the dispute and end the ongoing hostilities. A reconciliation conference was scheduled for 15 April, but was later postponed until May. In preparation for the conference, Civil Affairs personnel hosted reconciliation workshops for both tribes.

In one of the workshop sessions, more than 100 representatives from the Beni Hussein tribe, including North Darfur leaders and youth groups, and leaders from White Nile, Khartoum, and Central, South and West Darfur, gathered to determine ways to eliminate the causes of the conflict in North Darfur. Workshop participants discussed ways local authorities could keep the situation stable, and deliberated over land ownership issues and the role of native administration in fostering a culture of peace and peaceful coexistence.

Following the workshops, on 23 April, UNAMID conducted another assessment of the humanitarian situation in Saraf Omra and the surrounding areas. The locality’s Commissioner noted that, even prior to the displacements from Jebel Amir, the area already had been the temporary home of an estimated 70,000 displaced people located in three camps that lack easy access to water, basic services and health care. The newly displaced from Jebel Amir, the Commissioner noted, only served to make more difficult an already difficult situation.

The assessment team visited Al Nasm, the largest of the three camps for displaced people, with a population mainly from the Messiriya tribe. Representatives of the displaced in the camp claimed that they had been uprooted from their original villages by the Abballa tribe. They expressed a willingness to return to their villages, but noted that

any return must be predicated on an improved security situation.

The interagency assessment mission, consisting of representatives from UNAMID and its UN Country Team partners, found that, beyond addressing immediate humanitarian needs, additional support to mediation activities would be critical in addressing the root causes of the conflict. UNAMID’s Civil Affairs section redoubled its efforts to work with local authorities, native administration leaders and local- and state-level peace committees to help bring an end to the dispute in North Darfur.

“We are trying to empower these local stakeholders with skills to undertake the various processes of mediation, conflict resolution and reconciliation at the local level, so that when we leave, we leave behind a legacy of necessary skills for them to continue to mediate and resolve conflicts without any negative fallout, such as displacements or casualties,” says Ms. Retta Reddy, Chief of UNAMID’s Civil Affairs section.

The Abbala and Beni Hussein issue is one of many such disputes that UNAMID has been working to help resolve by directly supporting local mediation initiatives. In addition to working with local and regional authorities, and with the communities themselves, to help solve disputes as they arise, one of the strategies that Civil Affairs has been working to implement is a preemptive approach to solving these disputes. For example, across Darfur, UNAMID’s Civil Affairs section has supported the establishment of 44 peaceful-coexistence committees that consist of native administrative leaders, tribal leaders, religious leaders and leaders from camps for displaced people.

These committees are designed to solve problems peacefully through negotiation and mediation rather than violence. “To help these committees run smoothly, Civil Affairs has held many meetings and conducted many workshops, all designed to cultivate effective mediation skills and foster an attitude conducive to the prevention and management of conflict through dialogue,” says Ms. Reddy. “Because some of the root causes of the local-level conflicts include access to water points, land ownership and natural resources, our



workshops have specifically focused on mediation related to these topics.”

Ms. Reddy explains that, even with such committees established across Darfur, there remains a need to put in place a systematic programme for Darfur-wide resource management. “Disarmament of various armed groups must take place before there is enough stability so access to natural resources can be worked out equitably,” she says.

In a recent dispute not unlike others that have emerged in the region, tensions over land use between the Misseriya and Salamat tribes in Um Dukhun, West Darfur, turned violent on 4 April, resulting in the displacement of an estimated 50,000 people. On 10 April, leaders of the Misseriya and Salamat signed an agreement to end hostilities, and agreed to hold reconciliation talks, supported by UNAMID’s Civil Affairs section.

Since UNAMID’s inception, the Mission has been directly engaged in addressing many such disputes and supporting their peaceful resolution. In 2010, for example, the Mission held reconciliation meetings between the Misseriya and the Nawaiba tribes in Central Darfur. The two feuding tribes signed a peace agreement on 28 June 2010.

In another example, in February 2010, following years of confrontation between the Zaghawa and Birgid in Shaeria, South Darfur, UNAMID’s Civil Affairs personnel met with both tribes in Shaeria to address their concerns following an outbreak of violence. The forum provided an opportunity for both tribes to share their ideas and views on how to reach an agreement and ensure peaceful coexistence. The meeting eased the tension between the tribes, and resulted in a cessation of hostilities.

Other Civil Affairs initiatives have included reconciliation meetings between nomads and sedentary tribes in Dourti, West Darfur. In 2009, Civil Affairs organized a meeting that focused on issues of common interest and social coexistence between the two groups. The meeting provided the participants with an opportunity to discuss issues transparently. Following discussions, the groups decided on an action plan that led to the creation of a committee representing both communi-



*The negotiations between the Abbala and Beni Hussein communities led to an initial ceasefire agreement signed on 18 January in Saraf Omra. However, as mediation efforts began to move forward, the fighting in North Darfur resumed, resulting in additional casualties and displacements. On 24 February 2013 in North Darfur, UNAMID airlifted 37 wounded civilians from the El Sereif locality to El Fasher for medical treatment. Photo by Rania Abdulrahman, UNAMID.*

ties, and ultimately to a more peaceful relationship between the two groups.

Another example of UNAMID’s support to local mediation efforts can be found in East Darfur. Since arriving in East Darfur, some of the residents of the Al Neem camp for displaced people have intended to return to their original lands in the Al Salayia area, southwest of El Daein. While the lands have never been their own, they have had an agreement in place with the Rezeigat tribe to farm them.

However, following the original farmers’ displacement, the Rezeigat loaned the land to others. Some of those in Al Neem have been calling to reactivate their agreement with the Rezeigat to move back to the area and farm the land. UNAMID has been working with all those involved to develop a possible solution, with one idea being for the new occupants and the returnees to share the land.

Two tribes settling a dispute or coming to agreement on a matter of mutual concern have not always prevented subsequent conflicts. “The situation is so charged and fragile in Darfur that a simple crime of attempted theft involving two different groups could end up as a full-blown tribal conflict,” says Ms. Reddy. “Nevertheless, we need to persevere in our efforts to bring about a peaceful reso-

lution of the various conflicts that result in lives lost, property damaged and civilians displaced.”

Despite UNAMID’s ongoing efforts, Darfur’s tribal clashes continue to spark deadly violence and hinder the work of humanitarian agencies. United Nations Peacekeeping Chief Hervé Ladsous spoke recently to urge the international community to press Darfur’s conflicting tribes and factions to reach settlement through dialogue. On 29 April, in an address to the UN Security Council on the work of UNAMID, the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations described the situation in Darfur as troubling.

The USG pointed out that resolving the conflict in Darfur continues to require a combined effort by the United Nations and African Union, along with the wider international community, to persuade the belligerent parties that there can be no violent solution to the conflict. “The people of Darfur have known conflict and suffering for too long,” he said, urging the Security Council to do all it can to help relieve the suffering of the people of Darfur and bring about an end to the fighting by supporting UNAMID and by applying additional pressure on the belligerent parties to reach a negotiated settlement. ■

## Solidarity Market: WFP's New Food System

The time when the World Food Programme distributed food only from trucks is passing. Now, the agency is implementing a new, efficient method designed to stimulate local economies.

BY ALBERT GONZÁLEZ FARRAN

**T**he World Food Programme (WFP) has implemented a new food-distribution concept in North Darfur with the goal of providing more autonomy to the agency's beneficiaries, all of whom have been affected in one way or another by Darfur's long years of conflict. The time when the World Food Programme distributed food only from trucks is passing. Now, the agency has embraced a newer and more community-based method of food distribution designed to stimulate local economies: the voucher system.

The most important element of this new system is a piece of paper that beneficiaries receive from WFP personnel to exchange for their preferred food at designated markets. WFP officials say this new system offers several benefits over the traditional truck-distribution method. While WFP's traditional method of food delivery is still applied in certain crisis situations and especially in regions of the world without the infrastructure needed to produce enough food for the people living there, the truck-delivery system requires significant operational overhead.

The voucher programme, highlighted in this photo story, transfers the food-distribution responsibilities to Darfuris themselves, who decide how they will use WFP's assis-

tance with the vouchers they receive. The beneficiaries typically exchange their vouchers at local markets for staples such as sugar, oil, millet, flour, lentils and even soap. In this way, the system sidesteps some of the logistical challenges associated with distributing food by truck to a large number of people across Darfur.

In addition to the logistics benefit, the voucher system is designed to contribute directly to the local economy. WFP distributes the vouchers to beneficiaries, who exchange them for the products traders buy from local farmers. In the end, the traders exchange the collected vouchers with WFP for the predetermined value of the vouchers. WFP officials say the system ends up supporting local farmers, who, in turn, are able to produce more food.

Since WFP began the initiative more than one year ago, roughly 200,000 people across North Darfur have participated in it. Due to the success of the voucher system, which initially targeted people in the Abu Shouk and Al Salam camps, along with those living in the villages of Kabkabiya and Saraf Omra, the project is expanding to other Darfur states. WFP is rolling the system out in West Darfur, then will extend it to South, Central and East Darfur. ■



**1** On 18 October 2012 in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur, a woman shows her World Food Programme voucher card at a designated distribution centre. In this system, vouchers can be exchanged for products such as sugar, salt, lentils, oil and cereals. This particular centre hosts 12 local vendors, all of whom accept the vouchers as payment.

**2** On 18 November 2012 in the Al Salam camp for internally displaced people, women exchange their World Food Programme (WFP) vouchers for food. The voucher programme transfers the food-distribution responsibilities to Darfuris themselves, who decide how they will use WFP's assistance with the vouchers they receive.

**3** On 18 November 2012 in the Al Salam camp for internally displaced people, a woman receives a World Food Programme voucher, which she will be able to exchange for food. In addition to the logistics benefit, the new voucher system is designed to contribute to the local economy.









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4 On 18 November 2012 in the Al Salam camp for displaced people, women wait to exchange their World Food Programme (WFP) vouchers for food in the Al Salam camp for internally displaced people. In this new system, WFP vouchers can be exchanged for products such as sugar, salt, lentils, oil and cereals.

5 On 18 November 2012 in the Al Salam camp for displaced people, women exchange their vouchers for food. Since the World Food Programme began the voucher initiative more than one year ago, roughly 200,000 people across North Darfur have participated in it.

6 On 18 November 2012 in the Al Salam camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur, a girl waits to exchange her World Food Programme voucher for food.



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On 18 November 2012 in the Al Salam camp for displaced people, a woman exchanges her vouchers for food. WFP officials say this new system offers several benefits over the traditional truck-distribution method.

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On 18 October 2012 in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur, a local voucher trader measures oil for distribution at a World Food Programme (WFP) food distribution centre.

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On 18 November 2012 in the Al Salam camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur, a boy sits atop food he has loaded on his cart. He received the food in exchange for World Food Programme vouchers.

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## Ephemeral Craft: An Interview with Henna Artist Fatima Mohamed

Henna, a temporary art form, has long been used to enhance personal style or make a fashion statement. In the conflict-torn region of Darfur, the craft is serving to bring people closer together.

BY ALA MAYYAH



On 30 March 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Ms. Fatama Mohamed, draws henna on a client's hand. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

**H**enna is one of the most popular personal art forms in Darfur. Local women use henna mainly for beautification, especially in preparation for weddings or similar auspicious occasions, such as the Eid holidays. Henna artists, locally called *hannana*, are not difficult to find in Darfur, but there are a few who have a reputation in the area as being among the best in their profession.

Ms. Fatima Mohamed, known to her friends and clients as Tata, is one of the most popular henna artists in Darfur.

Her reputation extends to Khartoum and even outside Sudan to places such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, where she frequently travels to serve her clients.

Born in 1979 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Ms. Tata spent her childhood years in her hometown. Afterward, she moved with her parents to Khartoum, where she finished high school, then returned to El Fasher. In 1997, Ms. Tata went again to Khartoum and studied accounting at the university

level for two years, but her passion for the art of henna was already taking her away from finance.

Currently, she is dedicated full-time to henna. She says her talent is in such high demand that she is able to support her parents and her 10 siblings. *Voices of Darfur* talked with Ms. Tata about her craft, its artistic and social aspects, and what it means to the people of Darfur.

**Voices of Darfur: Could you give us an idea of the origins of the henna art?**



**Tata:** Henna is a plant that grows widely in Sudan, including in Darfur. It has a strong smell. A red paste is made of its dry leaves when mixed with water. After pouring the paste in the bag, tying the bag and making a small hole in one its corners, we apply the paste to the skin. Then when the bag is squeezed, the henna paste leaks out and allows you to draw with it. A certain kind of oil has to be applied to the skin before the henna is applied, and the skin has to be washed with water after one or two hours of applying the henna. This is the process for the red henna.

As for the black henna, a certain colouring material was used previously, up until 15 years ago, but not anymore since the Ministry of Health announced a warning that using that material could have a negative health effect. Currently, we use a colouring locally called *beqben*. It's available in pharmacies and in beauty salons.

**VoD:** Historically, did the art of henna come to Darfur from neighbouring countries, or is it originally a local art?

**Tata:** Actually, henna art started in Sudan and in India in ancient times, and then it spread to other countries over the years. So you can say it's a pure original art in Sudan.

**VoD:** How long does a henna drawing usually last?

**Tata:** It stays for two to three weeks, and it can be washed out either with water or with cola liquid, or with some lotions that are used for hair straightening.

**VoD:** How did you get started with this art?

**Tata:** In my childhood, I used to draw pictures of nature. I used to love drawing, which gave me the necessary basic skills for henna, which I did for the first time in primary school. I'm self-taught in this art because there was no one to teach me. I started with my relatives, doing my own henna designs on their hands. I remember they used to express words of admiration for my work, which I did nicely and neatly, and that encouraged me to continue.

**“Through my henna work, many Darfuri families have become friends with each other, regardless of their tribal origin.”**

**VoD:** And when did you start taking fees for it as your profession?

**Tata:** Since high school. At that time, my fees varied from one client to another, according to their financial ability, but I was happy to earn some money anyway, even if it was very little.

**VoD:** Do you usually design your own patterns or do you take them from some other source?

**Tata:** I design all my patterns, and I have a big collection of varied patterns to match all kinds of tastes.

**VoD:** Where do you get your inspiration?

**Tata:** Anything in my surrounding can be an inspiration to me, whether tree leaves, flowers or some geometric shapes. In the end, I use my imagination as my main source of inspiration to create new patterns.

**VoD:** Do you need to change your style from time to time to keep up with fashion trends?

**Tata:** Yes, of course. Some old designs fall out of demand, so I add to them new details and change them a bit according to new fashion, because henna drawing is part of the overall appearance.

**VoD:** You have clients in Khartoum and even outside Sudan. How did you achieve that?

**Tata:** In 2002, I worked in a Khartoum beauty salon, where I used to do henna for many clients. It seems they loved my work, so I developed a good reputation. In 2005, owners of beauty salons in Dubai started coming to Khartoum for business, looking for good henna artists to contract them for work in their shops. One of them came to the salon I used to work in and liked my work very much and gave me an offer to work in her salon. I accepted the offer because it was a good opportunity. I went to Dubai and worked there for two years. During that time, I met several

clients who liked my work. I still receive requests and invitations from my clients in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

**VoD:** Do the henna patterns have names and do they have meanings that are related in a way to Darfur's culture?

**Tata:** Generally, they don't have names. We identify them by shapes; some of them are flowery like roses or tulips, while others look like lace fabric. I show them to clients in photos so they can make their selections. Socially, in Darfur, there are some patterns that are for married women only, and it wouldn't be appropriate for unmarried women to use these patterns because they are very ornamental and considered highly attractive.

Also, girls are not allowed to apply henna before age 10. After that, they are allowed to have simple henna drawings until adulthood. In the Gulf, local and foreign women can use any pattern they like, including highly attractive patterns. And even little girls there, accompanied by their mothers, sometimes go to beauty salons for henna drawings.

**VoD:** Is there any difference between the patterns used in Darfur and those used in Khartoum?

**Tata:** Darfur designs are the same as in Khartoum and in all Sudan. But the Sudanese henna designs are different from the Indian, as Indian designs typically consist of very small ornaments. We use them here sometimes and we call them Indian ornaments. The Sudanese henna designs have their own character and shapes. They're more liked locally and abroad. Henna is very different from western tattoos, which can be drawings of animals, such as tigers, falcons or scorpions, or geometric shapes. Sudanese henna drawings come only in black or red, while tattoos can be various colours.



On 30 March 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Ms. Fatama Mohamed, known locally as Ms. Tata, draws henna on the hand of one of her clients. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

**“I want to tell all Darfuris they should behave like Darfur’s tribal elders in the old times. They lived together peacefully, caring for each other and in harmony with one another.”**

**VoD:** In Darfur, are there some ceremonies or traditional rituals where henna drawings are expected?

**Tata:** Only for marriage do we have special henna ceremonies. In the marriage process, a special day is set aside for henna. For these ceremonies, we use what is called the *jerek*, which is a tray that consists of henna and other materials, such as silk threads, wooden containers for local scents, called *mebkeher*, and a rosary of large black and red beads, called *Sibhat El Yusr*, which is meant to bring blessings.

During this ceremony, the grandmother applies henna to the bride, shaping only a small straight line on her forehead. At that moment, the invited women start singing certain songs, praising the bride’s beauty and wishing her happiness. Then the party starts.

The henna drawing is applied to the bride on another day. The drawing on her feet is done a week prior to the wedding, while the drawing on her hands is done on the morning of the wedding. Other than weddings, women usually apply henna at

any time without special ceremonies.

**VoD:** Do you charge high rates because of your reputation for being one of the best henna artists in Sudan?

**Tata:** Not at all. My prices are quite reasonable. I take into consideration the financial situation of my clients when I charge them. Sometimes I give discounts to regular clients. At other times, I might not charge a client at all if she can’t afford it.

**VoD:** Has your business in Darfur slowed since the conflict started?

**Tata:** Yes, very much so compared to the years before the war. That was one of the reasons for me to travel and work in Dubai. Currently, the local demand is a bit better, but it’s still down from what it once was. Many of my clients have left Darfur and have settled in Khartoum or in other countries because of the difficult situation here.

**VoD:** Are you ever asked how you justify doing your work while the people of Darfur are still going through hard times due to the conflict?

**Tata:** Actually, I am proud of my

work because it helps lift up the spirits of Darfuri women. My art boosts their morale and makes them feel better. Thus, I see my work as being helpful in difficult times because it helps the women here face life’s hardships with a positive attitude.

**VoD:** So you see henna art as a positive social force in Darfur?

**Tata:** As a henna artist doing this work for many years now, I’ve met a large number of Darfuri women from different tribes. They meet with each other while I’m doing henna. I usually do my work in a welcoming and sociable atmosphere that encourages women to talk to one another in a friendly manner. Sometimes they become good friends. I’ve found that even women coming from different tribes that had not been interacting with each other because of a dispute have become friends again after meeting while I’m doing my henna work. Through my henna work, many Darfuri families have become friends with each other, regardless of their tribal origin.

**VoD:** So you believe henna can contribute in a way to social development and stability in Darfur?

**Tata:** Yes, of course. For example, some messages promoting peace or women’s empowerment can be designed in an artful way and applied as henna drawings. Slogans such as “we love peace,” “peaceful coexistence” or “support women’s rights” would be highly accepted and used among many Darfuri women when they participate in related events during the year. In this way they could contribute to spreading effective concepts in line with the present peace process and efforts to rebuild Darfur.

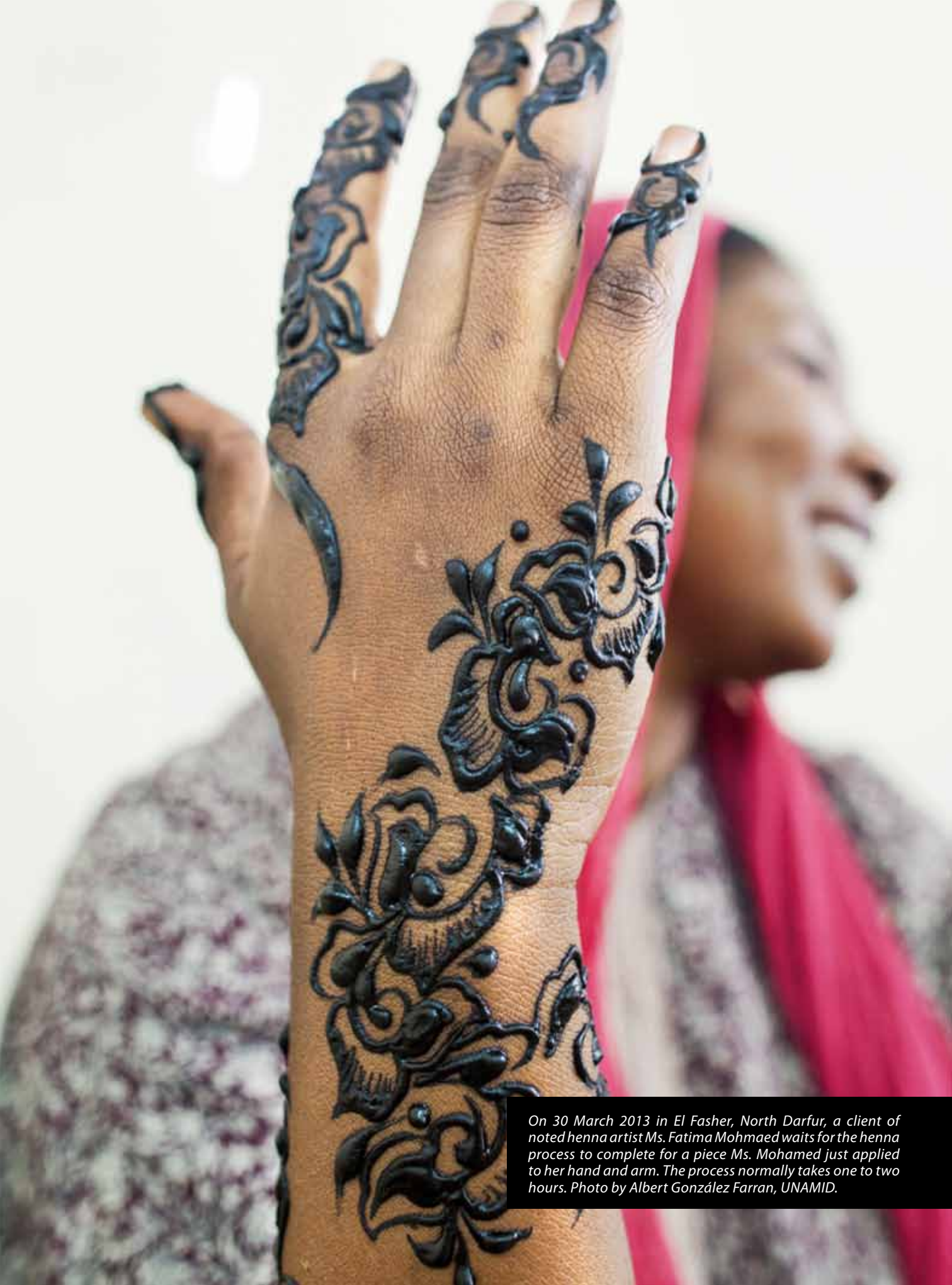
**VoD:** What is your ambition in the henna art field?

**Tata:** I would like to establish my own salon in El Fasher, dedicated only to henna drawing.

**VoD:** Is there a special message you would like to deliver to Darfuris?

**Tata:** I want to tell all Darfuris they should behave like Darfur’s tribal elders in the old times. They lived together peacefully, caring for each other and in harmony with one another. ■





*On 30 March 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, a client of noted henna artist Ms. Fatima Mohmaed waits for the henna process to complete for a piece Ms. Mohamed just applied to her hand and arm. The process normally takes one to two hours. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*



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