

UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur

# VOICES

of Darfur

JULY 2013

## Darfur's Art

**An Interview with  
Historian  
Gibreel Abdulaziz**

**Volunteers Work on  
Peace in IDP Camps**

*Revamped approach to  
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**A Medical Clinic Rises  
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**Inside Darfur's Higher  
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*Students look to the  
future and to peace*



AFRICAN UNION - UNITED NATIONS  
MISSION IN DARFUR  
(UNAMID)



*On 5 June 2013, the hands of academic and historian Gibreel Abdulaziz are pictured as he prepares to write in his home in Khartoum, Sudan. Mr. Abdulaziz recently published a 700-page book on the history of El Fasher, documenting notable Darfuri figures, including artists and intellectuals. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm pleased to introduce the July 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 "Darfur's University Students Look to the Future," Mr. Emadeldin Rijal and Ms. Sharon Lukunka offer an in-depth look at how Darfur's universities have been struggling with resource shortages and aging infrastructure, but are continuing to serve as agents of peace, providing training for young people hoping to make a difference in the region. While the universities in Darfur, and in particular their Centres for Peace and Development Studies, continue to work toward sustainable solutions to the ongoing conflict, their challenges remain clear.

In the viewpoint published in this issue, titled "Progress Made on Explosive Remnants of War," Mr. Max Dyck, Programme Manager of UNAMID's Ordnance Disposal Office (ODO), outlines how, through Darfur-wide education efforts, ODO and its partners have been able to highlight the dangers associated with unexploded ordnance to millions of people in the region. Mr. Dyck points out that facial scars and missing limbs—especially when the victims are children—are sending lasting and meaningful messages about the dangers of these remnants of war.

In "A Medical Clinic Rises from the Ashes," Mr. Albert González Farran presents a photo essay designed to highlight a small-scale humanitarian project that is having a big impact. In response to the Zam Zam camp for displaced people in North Darfur losing one of its medical clinics in an accidental fire earlier this year, UNAMID constructed two durable tents that are now providing a clean space in which doctors can treat their patients.

In "Volunteers Work Toward Peace in IDP Camps," Ms. Lukunka writes about the Mission's new approach to community policing. At the heart of the new framework is a focus on more direct cooperation and coordination with Darfur's communities to support the security efforts in camps for displaced people. The article outlines UNAMID's objectives in training more than 6,500 community-policing volunteers, and describes how those volunteers are contributing to a more peaceful and secure environment in camps for the displaced.

In "The Culture of Tea in Darfur," Mr. Abdulahi Shuaibu offers an overview of the taking of tea in this part of the world. Tea is a vital part of the daily life here, and is typically taken at breaks in the morning and afternoon, when Darfuris gather to socialize and discuss family issues, politics and the news of the day. Mr. Shuaibu explains how a great deal of prestige is attached to the taking of tea by Darfuris, even to the point where the people here have coined the phrase *Haflat Shai*, which translates in English as "tea ceremony."

Finally, in our cover feature, "Darfur's Art," Ms. Ala Mayyahi presents an interview with historian Gibreel Abdulaziz, who recently published a book on the history of El Fasher. In the interview, Mr. Abdulaziz offers insight into how Darfur's arts developed. In addition to being a teacher and a scholar, Mr. Abdulaziz's long career has involved several prestigious positions, including Chief of State Council, Minister of Education and Minister of Social and Culture Affairs, all in North Darfur.

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 5 June 2013, academic and historian Gibreel Abdulaziz is pictured in his house in Khartoum, Sudan. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 2 June 2013, a child smiles in the Al Salam camp for internally displaced people in El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

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## UNAMID Hosts Special Envoys Retreat, Reaches Out to Shangil Tobaya Community

Following a meeting of international Special Envoys, conducted at UNAMID headquarters, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) and Joint Chief Mediator, noted that the participants were unanimous in expressing their continuing support for the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) and calling for its full implementation.

In a press conference following the meeting, the JSR also noted that the meeting's participants unanimously voiced concern over the deterioration of the security situation in Darfur and the reduction in funding available to aid agencies and humanitarian actors in the region.

The Special Envoys Retreat, held on 17 and 18 June in El Fasher, North Darfur, focused on current developments across the region, including the state of the peace process as well as the security and humanitarian situation. As part of the program, the envoys, along with

UNAMID representatives and the diplomatic corps taking part in the event, visited Shangil Tobaya in North Darfur, where they toured a new health care centre in the Shadad camp for internally displaced people. The healthcare centre, constructed with funding from UNAMID's quick-impact project programme, treats nearly 100 patients every day.

Also in Shangil Tobaya, JSR Chambas and the delegation witnessed a mediation and reconciliation workshop organized by the Mission's Civil Affairs section. The workshop, one of many such meetings designed to address inter- and intra-tribal conflict, focused on different beneficial aspects of peaceful coexistence.

"I am happy to see that you are coming together to discuss how to resolve your differences," said Dr. Chambas in his address to the participants. "I encourage you to continue to pursue peaceful means to resolve conflict and to live together harmoniously."



On 18 June 2013, UNAMID JSR Mohamed Ibn Chambas greets representatives of Shangil Tobaya. Photo by Rania Abdulrahman, UNAMID.

The JSR and other members of the delegation met with various community representatives, including the commissioner of Dar al Salaam locality, traditional leaders and women's and youth group representatives. They discussed the situation on the ground and community needs, most notably those relating to the provision of education, healthcare, water and sanitation facilities as well as vocational training.

Dr. Chambas briefed the community representatives on

several issues, including UNAMID's efforts to provide security and the Mission's work to support the peace process. "The search for peace started some time ago, and many people are working tirelessly to help resolve community grievances," he said. "We need you all to play your role in bringing durable peace to all Darfuris."

During the meeting, the JSR announced the launch of two quick-impact projects in the Shangil Tobaya and Dar al Salaam localities. ■



Newly appointed UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative Joseph Mutaboba of Rwanda. Photo by Rick Bajornas, UN Photo.

## Deputy Joint Special Representative Appointed

On 20 June 2013, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mrs. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, appointed Mr. Joseph Mutaboba of Rwanda as African Union and United Nations Deputy Joint Special Representative in Darfur and Deputy Head of UNAMID.

Mr. Mutaboba replaces Ms. Aichatou Mindaoudou of Niger. In a statement, the Secretary-General expressed appreciation to Ms. Mindaoudou for her "tireless dedication and

invaluable service during her tenure in UNAMID."

Mr. Mutaboba brings to his new position experience in diplomacy and foreign affairs, most recently serving as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UN-OGBIS) until January 2013.

He previously served as the Rwandan President's Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, and as Secretary-General in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and

Internal Affairs. Earlier, he held several senior level positions as the Deputy National Coordinator for Rwanda, the Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1999 to 2001 and as a senior diplomat in Addis Ababa and Washington, D.C.

Mr. Mutaboba has a Masters degree in library and information science from North London University. He speaks English and French, and has a working knowledge of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. Born in 1949, he is married and has three children. ■

## UNAMID Commemorates Peacekeepers Day, Remembers Those Fallen

On 29 May 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID joined in the worldwide commemoration of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The day, marked in Darfur's five states, provided an opportunity to raise awareness about new developments in the field of peacekeeping while honouring those who have lost their lives serving under the blue flag.

The programme in El Fasher, North Darfur, opened with a military and police parade and a solemn wreath-laying ceremony. The event included cultural activities by UNAMID's contingents and local groups. During the ceremony, Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas conveyed a message

by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

"To meet emerging threats and rise to new challenges, United Nations peacekeeping is adapting its policies to better fulfil its mandates to bring lasting peace to war-torn countries," said the JSR, quoting from the Secretary-General's message. "On this International Day, let us pay solemn tribute to those who have fallen, support the more than 111,000 serving soldiers and police from 116 countries, and continue adapting our operations to better help civilians who need protection and support."

The event in El Fasher was attended by North Darfur Wali (Governor) Osman Kibir, representatives from the local community and non-govern-



Peacekeepers from UNAMID's military component stand in formation during the commemoration of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

mental organizations, as well as UNAMID staff. Wali Kibir spoke during the event and expressed his condolences "for those who lost their lives serving peace in Darfur."

Since the inception of

UNAMID in December 2007, 44 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty. UNAMID's peacekeepers—24,441 military, police and civilians staff—come from more than 130 nations. ■

### El Sereif, North Darfur



On 13 May 2013, a mother watches over her child, who is suffering from malnutrition in El Sereif Hospital, North Darfur. The hospital in this village was reopened in January 2013 following the arrival of thousands of people displaced by tribal clashes. The hospital is run by a single doctor who attends to nearly 300 patients each day. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## El Fasher, North Darfur



*On 22 May 2013, a woman carries humanitarian supplies distributed by UN agencies for a new settlement in the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur. Most of the new arrivals came from Labado and Muhajeria in East Darfur, following violent clashes there. This new settlement in Zam Zam is occupied solely by women and children. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

## UNAMID Continues to Help Rebuild Darfur's Schools

As part of the Mission's ongoing work to assist in making the school environments across Darfur more conducive to learning, UNAMID funded the construction of two classrooms and an office at Umbaro Secondary School for Boys, located roughly 300 kilometres northwest of El Fasher, North Darfur.

The three-month quick-impact project, which began in March and concluded in June, was implemented by local nongovernmental organisation Al-Nahda. The new facilities, which were officially handed over to the Education Authority in Umbaro in June 2013, are designed to help

address the issue of overcrowding at the school, now attended by more than 750 students, 450 of which are newly enrolled.

"Such projects will definitely encourage the stability of our community," said Mr. Kemal Mohammed Saleh, Deputy Headmaster of the Umbaro School, during the official inauguration ceremony.

Through its quick-impact projects programme and in collaboration with education stakeholders in the region, UNAMID has been contributing to the amelioration of the conditions at schools across Darfur by funding the



*In June 2013, two new classrooms and an office building, funded through UNAMID's quick-impact project programme, were completed in Umbaro, roughly 300 kilometres northwest of El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*

construction of new classrooms and helping to repair damaged buildings and helping to repair damaged store basic services. ■

## UNAMID Supports CECAFA Championship in Darfur

The Council for the East and Central Africa Football Association (CECAFA) Senior Challenge Cup, hosted recently in El Fasher, North Darfur, was a magnet for thousands of people throughout the region. The regional tournament, the 39th CECAFA Cup, drew football clubs from Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Djibouti, Uganda, Chad and Sudan.

The regular event, which this year kicked off in Kudugli, South Kordofan, and concluded in El Fasher, is set up to cultivate a strong sense of social and political connectedness among the different ethnic groups across the region.

“Our aim of hosting the

CECAFA Cup is to bring people together,” said Mr. Osman Kibir, the Wali (Governor) of North Darfur, in an interview with El Fasher Radio. He pointed out that such events are effective in creating an atmosphere of social harmony.

The tournament festivities, held from 18 June to 2 July, drew crowds of spectators from across Darfur, including from camps for internally displaced people. During the tournament, which was supported by UNAMID through the provision of diesel generators and other equipment, Darfuri spectators cheered to express support for and solidarity with Merriekh El Fasher as one



The football match between Mariekh El Fasher and Rwandan Ryon Sport to determine the third place of the CECAFA Cup Championship in El Fasher's stadium. UNAMID supported the tournament, designed to foster social harmony, through the provision of equipment and transportation. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

of the Sudan teams competing in the championship, and the only team from Darfur participating in the event. ■

## El Fasher, North Darfur



On 20 June 2013, street children dance during a World Refugee Day ceremony organized by UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The event was set up to raise awareness about the refugee situation in Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



## El Fasher, North Darfur



On 21 May 2013, UNAMID Police Advisors, Major Khalid Arrejamy, from Yemen, and Constable Prisca Kisonga, from Tanzania, prepare to go on patrol in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people near El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

## UNAMID Head Visits Zam Zam Camp in North Darfur

On 24 June 2013, on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID Joint Special Representative Mohamed Ibn Chambas visited the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people to strengthen ties with the community's leaders, youth groups and other residents of the camp.

In a speech delivered during a ceremony to honour the winners of the final match of a youth football tournament organized by UNAMID in collaboration with the Zam Zam Youth Union, JSR Chambas assured the Zam Zam community of the Mission's commitment to implement its mandate.

"We are here in Darfur to provide protection in Zam Zam and other camps, to facilitate humanitarian aid and to work with you in searching for per-



On 24 June 2013, football players celebrate their first place victory at the closing ceremony of the football competition in the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

manent and lasting peace in the region," he said.

"Let me thank the young people who have been engaged

in this healthy competition, trying to see who will be the champion," said UNAMID's Head. "It is not important who wins;

it is the spirit in which you have been playing together and enjoying yourselves that we have come to celebrate." ■

## Darfur's University Students Look to the Future

While Darfur's universities have been struggling with resource shortages and aging infrastructure, they continue to serve as agents of peace, providing training for young people hoping to make a difference.

BY EMADELDIN RIJAL AND SHARON LUKUNKA



On 14 May 2011, in El Fasher, North Darfur, some 6,000 people attend the graduation ceremonies of the Open University of Sudan. The event was the first ceremony since the university began its work in Darfur. The Open University of Sudan, which has more than 20 learning centres in the region, offers access to higher education for students of all ages and backgrounds. Photo by Albert Gonzalez Farran, UNAMID.

There are three main universities in Darfur: the University of El Fasher, the University of Nyala and the University of Zalingei. Each of these universities offers certificates and diplomas in two- and three-year programmes. They also offer Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate degrees in several fields. Although there are some courses, in education and economics, for example, that all Darfur universities offer, each university has a unique speciality.

For example, the College of Medicine is specific to El Fasher University, the

College of Agriculture is specific to the University of Zalingei and the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Engineering Science are specific to the University of Nyala. Through these postgraduate courses, Darfur universities provide opportunities for advanced research on the region's problems. While the postgraduate course offerings differ from one university to another, in nearly every program offered in the universities here, professors place emphasis on benefiting Darfur.

"The universities collaborate with vari-

ous bodies, such as UN agencies, international organizations, UNAMID and Government institutions in implementing programmes and projects designed to benefit communities across the region," says Mr. Badreldin Ahmed, Dean of the College of Economics at the University of Zalingei.

Darfur's professors place special emphasis on issues related to human conflict and the environment, and on ways to apply scientific research to the problems faced at the local and national levels. Apart from their role in teaching and pro-

viding guidance for advanced research, the universities in Darfur are focused on cultivating knowledge of and awareness about issues local communities are facing across Darfur. Courses offered here focus on peace-building, poverty, sustainable development, environmental issues and a wide range of other topics that directly relate to Darfur's pressing problems.

Many of the students in Darfur's universities are exempt from fees. Both the now-defunct Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and current peace agreement, the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), provide for a fee exemption for Darfuris who belong to families that have been affected by the conflict. While the universities here attract students from across Sudan, the majority of students attending Darfur's universities are from Darfur.

The DDPD stipulates education funding and development through the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), but the universities in Darfur remain one of the public institutions most affected by the conflict, and the DRA continues to struggle with its own funding. "One of the main problems we face is the lack of resources," says Mr. Ahmed. With limited resources, Darfur's universities remain heavily dependent on Government funding and the assistance of UN agencies and international and national nongovernmental organisations.

Despite the lack of resources, Darfur's universities have continued to educate students, many of whom return to their communities to work on the problems facing them there. "As a graduate of one of the Darfur universities, I offer psychological counselling to Darfuri communities, given that many of the Darfuri people have psychologically suffered from the conflict in the region," says Mr. Mohammed Eissa, who graduated in 2007 from El Fasher University with a degree in psychology. After graduation, Mr. Eissa earned a Masters degree in social psychology.

Official records indicate that from 1994 to 2009, more than 12,000 students

**"The universities collaborate with various bodies, such as UN agencies, international organizations, UNAMID and Government institutions in implementing programmes and projects designed to benefit communities across the region."**

**—Badreldin Ahmed**

graduated from El Fasher University alone. Ms. Sanna Adam, an undergraduate student at El Fasher University, says she hopes to work with the vulnerable children of Darfur when she graduates. She is close to completing her studies in the university's College of Human Development, and says she intends to work as a teacher so she can contribute to Darfur's recovery.

While there are countless Darfuri students full of optimism for the future of this region of Sudan, and countless stories of graduates who have returned to their communities to help solve the problems facing them, the challenges are significant. On a basic level, the shortage of classrooms and laboratories is a major concern for university administrators. For instance, the University of Zalingei, located primar-

ily in Central Darfur but with several colleges in El Geneina, West Darfur, has long suffered from lack of resources. Compounding this problem, the university has been facing regular power outages.

Until recently, the university had a single small computer lab equipped with 12 computers used by hundreds of students. Students wishing to study computer science or information technology as minors were unlikely even to be able to sit at one of these workstations. "I did not get the chance to use a computer at the university for two years," says Mr. Amani Khamis, a student at the College of Information Technology.

In addition to many students not being able to use the limited number of computers, the information technology

*On 12 November 2012, in El Geneina, West Darfur, students socialize outside the library on the University of El Geneina campus. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*





On 12 November 2012, in El Geneina, West Darfur, students study at the University of El Geneina. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

**“As a graduate of one of the Darfur universities, I offer psychological counselling to Darfuri communities, given that many of the Darfuri people have psychologically suffered from the conflict in the region.”**

**—Mohammed Eissa**

and computer science curricula themselves were affected. “Some of the applied computer courses were being delayed due to the shortage of computers in the laboratory,” says Mr. Ahmed Mahdi, Registrar in the College of Information Technology at the University of Zalingei.

“Because of lack of computers, we could not do the practical part of the computer subjects in the first year,” says Ms. Makarim Suleiman, a student studying information technology. Ms. Suleiman says that, while there are a few computers available, they are monopolized by the students specializing in computer science.

Recognizing the resource problem, UNAMID has been making efforts to implement quick-impact projects (QIPs) designed to have a measurable effect on the ability of students to pursue their goals in higher education. In one such QIP,

UNAMID provided 36 computers to the University of Zalingei. “Without the projects being provided by UNAMID, we could not achieve our education goals,” says Registrar Mahdi, who notes that with the provision of the new computers, the computer laboratory now can accommodate many more students.

After the installation of the new laboratory, the university has been able to offer computer-related courses to a much larger number of students. Recently, for example, 40 people from the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Labour in West Darfur took a complete course on the basics of computer use and maintenance.

In addition to providing computers, UNAMID has worked on construction projects to help rebuild university infrastructure. In one such project, UNAMID funded the construction of a large lecture

hall. In another project, the Mission provided and installed a generator designed to help the university run smoothly through power outages.

As part of its engagement with the universities across Darfur, UNAMID has been working with professors and administrators to conduct debates on issues of importance to the people of the region. The debates are typically attended by students, professors and community members. These debates are usually arranged through the Centres for Peace and Development Studies.

Ms. Amna Yagoub and Mr. Salah Bingawi, natives of El Fasher, North Darfur, are among several students pursuing educations in the University of El Fasher’s Centre for Peace and Development Studies. Selecting this field of interest, they say, was not challenging for them. They say they were motivated by the problems their communities are facing and hope to be able to make a difference when they graduate.

Ms. Yagoub, who received a Bachelors degree in economics from the University of El Fasher, recently completed two years of coursework at the Centre and is now working on her final research project, which focuses on ways to reduce violence against women in North Darfur. “I

would like to translate what I have learned to promote peaceful coexistence, stability and development in our communities as well as ensure gender equality in the region,” she says. “The Centre serves as an important information resource on the conflict and helps promote a culture of peace.”

Like her colleague, Mr. Bingawi has completed two years of studies at the Centre and now is working on his final research project on the role of the United Nations in addressing armed movements. “I chose such a topic so I can better understand the work of UN peacekeeping missions around the world, with particular emphasis on UNAMID,” he says.

As he writes his final project, Mr. Bingawi is working as an administrative officer in one of the local Government institutions in El Fasher, North Darfur. He has a Bachelors degree in political science from the University of Khartoum. When asked why he chose to pursue studies in peace and development, he explains that he interacts with various social groups faced with numerous challenges and continued his studies at the Centre to learn new ways to overcome those challenges.

The Centre for Peace and Development Studies was established in 2000 by Dr. Osam Ibrahim, then a professor in the College of Human Development at El Fasher University, to promote research on the causes of conflict and the conditions that affect conflict resolution and peace. The Centres in each of the universities here consist of six basic course tracks: peace; development; human rights; information and research; women’s studies; computer science; and library science. The Centre offers Masters degrees and research certificates to students from a wide variety of disciplinary and professional backgrounds who are seeking a career in peace, development or human rights, or who want to enhance the skills they have developed in their respective fields.

The Centre began offering Masters degrees in 2009. Before that, the Centres served primarily as research institutes, conducting seminars, workshops and conferences. “Since the introduction of the Masters program at the Centres, about 10 students have successfully graduated,” says Dr. Emadeldin Ahmed, the Centre’s Acting Director. “After students complete

their coursework, they focus on their research paper and submit it for approval before they obtain their Masters degree.”

The Centre at the University of El Fasher is staffed by professors who also serve as consultants for policymakers in dealing with peace-building strategies and techniques. More than 150 students are presently enrolled at the El Fasher Centre alone. “About 80 per cent of the students at the Centre are already employed in Government institutions, while others are seeking employment with the United Nations,” says Dr. Ahmed.

“The Centres have been contributing to the culture of peace, especially among farmers and herders, through various community-based programs in collaboration with UNAMID and other UN Agencies,” says Dr. Ibrahim, who explains that, while students affected by the conflict may qualify for tuition exemptions at the universities in Darfur, students enrolled at the Centre for Peace and Development Studies are required to pay tuition. International nongovernmental organization Academic and Educational Development (AED) has been working in partnership with the Centre to assist students with their tuition requirements.

In 2010, the Centre and AED selected five students from camps for internally displaced people around North Darfur to receive full scholarships to study at the Centre. “Two of the students have graduated, while the other three are in the process of completing their research projects,” says Dr. Ahmed, noting that AED has supported the Centre’s library with a donation of more than 400 books in law, development and peace. “Since its creation, the Centre has acted as a way the university can strengthen ties in the community, helping to providing realistic solutions to the Darfur conflict.”

El Fasher’s Centre works in collaboration with the two other Centres in the region, especially on the organisation of Darfur-wide workshops on conflict resolution or other topics, and on regional debates, which are a mainstay of the Centre’s activities in providing a platform for university students to learn and share knowledge about the conflict in the region and express and contribute ideas. UNAMID has worked closely with the Centres to organize these debates, which are typically attended by several hundred students, professors and members of the local communities.

**“Without the projects being provided by UNAMID, we could not achieve our education goals.”**

**—Ahmed Mahdi**

*On 12 November 2012, in El Geneina, West Darfur, students socialize outside a lecture room on the University of El Geneina campus. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*





On 19 May 2013, in El Fasher, North Darfur, students participate in a workshop on a new pilot project conducted by the University of El Fasher's Centre for Peace and Development Studies. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

**“I would like to translate what I have learned to promote peaceful coexistence, stability and development in our communities as well as ensure gender equality in the region.”**

**—Amna Yagoub**

In one debate, those present discussed whether an economic or political solution is the answer to the conflict in Darfur. The majority of students attending this particular debate voted for a political solution, while some noted in the ensuing discussion that both solutions are needed for sustainable peace. Another debate covered the topic of cultural and political identity and what kind of impact such identities have on peaceful coexistence in Darfur.

Another aspect of the work the Centres are doing to contribute to peace in Darfur is a volunteer youth project. The one-year pilot project, which is being undertaken by all three Centres in Darfur, is designed to provide young people living in rural areas with the skills they need to train others. Their study topics include conflict analysis, management, entrepreneurship, environmental issues,

microfinance and computer skills. “At the end of the training programme, students will be provided with a grant and a computer, and deployed to different locations so they can train others,” says Acting Director Ahmed.

Mr. Rudwan Idris, who comes from a village near Saraf Omra, North Darfur, says he moved to El Fasher more than five years ago to study and focus on his career. “I want to help my community and provide the necessary support for the rural areas because our community has been affected by the conflict and is in need of development,” he says. Mr. Idris earned a Master’s degree in peace and development studies last year and is now one of the youth volunteers in the new programme.

“We, as pioneers, will train others to be leaders in our community, so we

can reduce the gap between conflict and peace,” he says. During one of his recent visits to his home village of Birka Sayra, Mr. Idris met with youth groups in the area to establish a youth council designed to support the community by implementing specific development projects. In one project they have worked to complete, the youth council organized the construction of a water well. “The youth also plan to build a secondary school,” says Mr. Idris.

The universities in Darfur, and in particular the Centres for Peace and Development Studies, continue to work toward sustainable solutions to the ongoing conflict, but their challenges remain clear, going forward. Long years of conflict have left buildings in disrepair, funding scarce and a sense of realism among university administrators about the system’s ability to provide education to all those who want it or need it. But if the sense of optimism shared by the university system’s bright young graduates can be used as an indicator of what the future holds, peace will be coming to this troubled region of the world, however long it might take. ■

# Progress Made on Darfur's Remnants of War

Through Darfur-wide education efforts to highlight the dangers of unexploded ordnance, UNAMID has reached millions of people. But much more work remains to be done.

BY MAX DYCK

As a result of the ongoing conflict in Darfur, explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to affect the people here, with 14 accidents recorded so far this year and 142 since the start of the Mission in early 2008. These incidents have resulted in 81 people being killed and 214 injured.

To address this issue, UNAMID's Ordnance Disposal Office (ODO) works closely with other Mission components, the United Nations Children's Fund, national nongovernmental organisations and relevant national stakeholders, such as the National Mine Action Centre and the Ministries of Education, Social affairs, Health, Religion, Youth and Sports. The purpose of this cooperation is to implement ERW risk-education activities. Through the efforts of ODO and our partners, we have managed to reach nearly 800,000 people directly with important messages about ERW, with an estimated 2.25 million others receiving indirect messaging.

This work has not been undertaken without strategic thinking. In 2011, ODO conducted a landmark survey to identify the attitudes that lead to risk-taking behaviour and the practices and beliefs in Darfur about ERW, including what level of knowledge there is about the dangers and risks posed by ERW. The findings of the recently completed survey, officially called the "Knowledge, Attitude, Belief and Practice (KABP) Survey," have allowed ODO and our partners in Darfur to fine-tune our methods and activities in the interest of achieving the kind of lasting behavioural change that will result in a decrease in the number of ERW accidents.

In addition to undertaking this behavioural study and working with partners to conduct mass communications designed to raise awareness across Darfur about the dangers posed by ERW, ODO has worked

with its partners to include risk-education activities in the basic Darfur school curriculum. The education programmes, which officially commenced in 2013, represent a major achievement in risk awareness.

The programmes likely will lead to a significant reduction in the number of injuries related to ERW. As part of this education programme, ODO has conducted training for 8,000 school teachers across Darfur, including in Nyala, El Fasher, Kabkabiya, Mellit, El Geneina, Kutum, Zalingei, and Umkadada. To support this

**Facial scars, missing limbs, the loss of eyesight—all of these physical indicators send lasting and meaningful messages about the dangers of unexploded ordnance.**

education programme, ODO has distributed actual school bells to replace the unexploded ordnance that, tragically, has been collected by teachers and students and used across the region to signal the beginning and ending of classes.

As part of a broader approach to risk education, ODO has trained 5,000 community volunteers and community leaders in the areas of Darfur with the highest number of ERW incidents. The goal of the volunteer programme is to facilitate information-sharing between at-risk communities. ODO has supplemented this volunteer training and its other activities with radio broadcasts.

While progress has been made, much more work needs to be done. ODO and its partners are currently developing new ways to reach the people affected by this issue. We are planning large information campaigns that rely on the use of social media and popular Sudanese websites to pass along risk-education messages and get more

involvement from the local population.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has agreed to integrate ERW risk-education sessions in every workshop it conducts in El Fasher. We are hoping this agreement soon will expand to include the other Darfur states. In addition, we are planning workshops for the Sheiks teaching the Koran in all Darfur states, and the use of mobile-phone networks to send risk-education text messages.

Finally, we are planning to have greater involvement from the victims of unexploded ordnance here in Darfur. There is no way to send a more powerful and memorable message about the dangers of unexploded ordnance than when it comes from the mouths of Darfuris who have been injured as a result of one of these ERW incidents. Facial scars, missing limbs, the loss of eyesight—all of these physical indicators, especially when the victims are children, send lasting and meaningful messages about the dangers of touching or even approaching unexploded ordnance.

As we move into the future, it is imperative that our risk-education activities and messaging continue to be an integral part of the work we undertake here. We recognise that there is a need to adapt and change the way activities are being undertaken in each of Darfur's states, as they each have different threats and different problems. Consistent with the results of the just-published KABP Survey, our activities will now be planned at the state level and hopefully will lead to an even more effective approach in making Darfur a safer place for everyone. ■

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## Volunteers Work Toward Peace in IDP Camps

At the heart of UNAMID's new community-policing framework is a focus on more direct coordination with Darfur's communities to support the safety of displaced people.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA



On 5 August 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID Police Lieutenant Colonel Yenni Windarti interacts with women at a water point in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people during a morning patrol. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

An increase in criminality is contributing to insecurity in some of Darfur's internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps. To help curb this violence among the different displaced communities, UNAMID has strengthened its community-policing framework. At the heart of this new framework is a focus on more direct cooperation and coordination with communities, as well as more robust monitoring of criminal activities to sup-

port the safety and security of displaced people across Darfur.

"Empowering the community to resolve issues through mediation and reconciliation, along with helping members of the community maintain law and order through more sophisticated neighbourhood watch programmes in the absence of police officers, are the foundations for community policing in Darfur," says UNAMID Deputy Police Commis-

sioner Syed Imam, who has worked to revamp the Mission's community-policing strategy in Darfur's camps.

To date, UNAMID has trained more than 6,500 community-policing volunteers (CPVs) to contribute to a peaceful and secure environment in the region. Mr. Adam Ali, originally from the Jabel Sei area in North Darfur, is one such CPV who has been working with UNAMID Police and with lo-



cal authorities to implement the new community strategy. When asked why he chose to be a community-policing volunteer, he says he wants to serve as a liaison between the residents of the camps and the local police to provide guidance and advice on how to deal with cases of criminality and violence.

The Abu Shouk camp for IPDs, located on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur, has nearly 200 CPVs who work hand in hand with local police and with UNAMID to monitor and report criminal incidents and help address the concerns of the residents. CPVs, all of whom are members of the communities they serve, are nominated by the camp leaders and Sudanese Police and are trained by UNAMID Police for their work as volunteers.

“When we first arrived in the camp in 2004, we were faced with numerous problems,” says an Abu Shouk community leader, Mr. Adam Ali Mohamed. “Criminal activity was relatively high, and as leaders we had to do something to help ourselves maintain some kind of normalcy.”

As in many other camps, and consistent with UNAMID’s community-policing strategy, Sudanese Police and community leaders in the Abu Shouk camp are physically collocated. “They work together resolving minor cases and help the police fight crime in the community,” says UNAMID Police Advisor Isaac Acheampong.

As part of routine work to help keep the security in the camps stable, the Mission’s Police conduct foot patrols accompanied by CPVs. They interact with residents, listen to their concerns and try to identify solutions to problems the IDPs are facing. “The joint patrols have enhanced the cooperation and coordination between UNAMID Police and the community, as well as local Sudanese Police,” says UNAMID Police Team Leader Mariama Mansaray. “Volunteers commit to work any time they are called upon by the Police to at-

“When we first arrived in the camp in 2004, we were faced with numerous problems. Criminal activity was relatively high, and as leaders we had to do something to help ourselves maintain some kind of normalcy.”

—Adam Ali Mohamed

tend to security and policing issues.”

Following these patrols, UNAMID’s Police component reports any criminal activity, such as robbery, rape and gunfire, to the local authorities. CPVs, acting as the eyes, ears and mouthpieces of their communities, are trained to advise camp residents to report any such cases of criminality or any suspicious behaviour in their areas. “When we receive information of an incident occurring in a neighbourhood, CPVs pursue the perpetrators and immediately inform the authorities,” says Mr. Mohamed, who notes that there has been a significant reduction in criminal incidents as a result of these new procedures.

“In the past, there was a lot of in-

security,” he says. “Criminals targeted homes to steal television sets, mobile telephones and money, but it is much safer now, although there are still pockets of insecurity from individuals who enter the camp at night and harass residents.”

To help protect the residents from being targets of harassment or theft, CPVs and community leaders work as a team each day, advising residents in their areas to lock their doors and switch off their mobile phones at night. “We also encourage them to be aware of their surroundings and avoid opening doors to strangers,” says Mr. Mohamed.

Mr. Aldouma Kharif, who works as a CPV specifically focused on youth issues

*On 9 May 2013 in the Abu Shouk camp in North Darfur, UNAMID Police Advisor Isaac Acheampong is pictured next to Sudanese Police Officers. Mr. Acheampong works as a focal point of the community-policing programme. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*



in the Abu Shouk camp, explains that, in the past, there were not many ways for the concerns of the camp's young people to be addressed, which led to many of them engaging in criminal activities. Now, he says, these criminal activity patterns are beginning to diminish. "As a CPV, I try to encourage my young peers to avoid mischief in our community and seek opportunities that will benefit them and their families in the long run," he says. "Today, as a result of these advocacy efforts, many young people from the camps have found jobs or have returned to school."

Camp leaders say that CPVs such as Mr. Kharif have earned respect in their communities because of the measurable impact they are having on the safety and security of the people living in the camps. They are seen as mentors and role models by the camps' young people, who look to them for guidance. "I advise the youth to display good behaviour in their communities and avoid harmful activities," says Mr. Kharif. "I also encourage the youth to play their

part in securing their areas so they can be free from criminal activities."

In addition to his general reporting and monitoring activities and liaising with UNAMID and Sudanese Police, Mr. Kharif dedicates much of his time to advising young people, especially those who are found wandering around the camps. "I speak to their friends or people who know them, because young people listen to each other and can be influenced by positive messages," he says.

Ms. Fatima Abdulhamid, a CPV who lives in the Abu Shouk camp, focuses on raising awareness among women and girls about gender-related matters, encouraging them to report incidents of rape and other types of gender-based violence. "I advise the women and girls to be aware of their surroundings and to be careful," she says.

Deputy Police Commissioner Imam says UNAMID's community-policing programme has worked well with the dynamic of the Sudanese Police. One key factor in the programme's success, he

says, has been the plan to strengthen relations with communities across Darfur by liaising more regularly with the displaced populations and understanding their day-to-day situations more thoroughly, effectively building more trust along with the communities' capacity to address issues as they emerge.

This more proactive approach includes more thorough interaction with IDPs on the part of UNAMID Police during daily patrols in and around camps, rather than waiting for locals to approach UNAMID personnel. The Deputy Police Commissioner says that, as a result of these efforts, UNAMID Police personnel have gained credibility and respect, and have built more trust at the local level.

As an example of work to strengthen ties with the community, UNAMID's Police component organized a community-policing symposium on 13 May 2013. The meeting was attended by more than 50 representatives from IDP camps across Darfur, along with Sudanese Police and officials from El Fasher University. The symposium provided a platform not only to showcase the benefits of a thorough community-policing approach but also to discuss challenges and strategies for its effective implementation.

"Members of the community have an important role to play in ensuring that community policing is effective and beneficial," says the Acting Police Commissioner. "The community should consider the police officers as their friends and should assist them in discharging their duties."

UNAMID Police Team Leader Mansaray explains that the increased visibility of UNAMID Police Advisors, accompanied by CPVs in the camps, has greatly improved security and built confidence among the IDP communities in the work the Mission is doing and in the work of police in general. "Community policing encourages mutual trust through joint implementation of various activities," says Ms. Mansaray.

Joint UNAMID-CPV activities, such as CPV training and combined foot patrols in the camps, are designed to cultivate a better understanding of community policing and ultimately help IDPs

**"The concept of community policing has proved to be very effective in Darfur as it empowers the population to contribute to their own security."**

**—Christopher Mofya**

*On 18 November 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, a boy speaks to a UNAMID Police Advisor in the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.*





On 3 November 2011 in the Dar El Salaam camp for displaced people in North Darfur, UNAMID collaborated with the North Darfur State Committee on Women to organise a session on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and to discuss the progress made in the State, including in camps for displaced people. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

play a more active role in ensuring their safety. “The concept of community policing has proved to be very effective in Darfur because it empowers the population to contribute to their own security,” says UNAMID Police Advisor Christopher Mofya. “Community policing is an integral component of UNAMID’s strategic plan, which seeks to build community trust and confidence, and promote effective public cooperation in reducing crime and disorder.”

As part of this general approach to strengthening ties with the IDP camp residents to enhance their safety and security, the Mission’s Police component has established community-policing centres in or near camps across Darfur. These centres serve as the physical locations where reports of criminality can be taken and concerns of the community heard.

Despite these ongoing efforts, safety and security in IDP camps remain a challenge for UNAMID, Sudanese Police and camp residents. Especially given the recent tribal clashes across

**“In the past, there was a lot of insecurity. Criminals targeted homes to steal television sets, mobile telephones and money, but it is much safer now, although there are still pockets of insecurity from individuals who enter the camp at night and harass residents.”**

**—Adam Ali Mohamed**

Darfur and hundreds of thousands of newly displaced, many of the vulnerable men, women and children of Darfur remain without any reliable means of making a living. Many lack access to basic healthcare and sanitation services. Poor living conditions and poverty in Darfur, as in other places of the world, contribute to criminality.

In this context, more than 150 community safety committees (CSCs) set up in IDP camps across Darfur are monitoring security issues and are actively involved with CPVs and with Sudanese

Police. CSCs consist of IDP camp representatives who meet once or twice each month with Sudanese Police, UNAMID Police and national and international non-governmental organisations to discuss concerns of the displaced population.

“The CSC meetings discuss security-related issues and identify solutions to safety and security problems affecting the IDP population,” says UNAMID Community Policing Officer Acheampong. “Decisions taken during the committee meetings are implemented by the CPVs, such as conducting regular patrols, and



On 7 October 2012 in El Daein, East Darfur, Mr. Ali Ahmed Mohamed, leader of the Community Policing Programme in the Al Neem camp for internally displaced people, interacts with two girls from the camp. In the Al Neem camp, more than 100,000 people from more than 30 different tribes are living together in close proximity. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

assisting the local Police in receiving and reporting cases.”

Another part of the Mission’s community-policing initiative is to conduct education and outreach programmes inside and outside IDP camps. In one such programme, more than 30 Sudanese Police Officers participated in a five-day workshop organized in El Geneina, West Darfur, to learn new community-policing strategies. The workshop focused on topics such as gender, rule of law and human rights. In another event, the Mission’s Police visited the Al Salaam Girls and Al Salaam Boys Schools in the Abu Shouk camp to reach out to the children of the camp and put a human face on the work of the police in helping to protect residents of the community.

While IDP leaders and Government officials say the reinvigorated community-policing approach is hav-

**“Community policing is an integral component of UNAMID’s strategic plan, which seeks to build community trust and confidence, and promote effective public cooperation in reducing crime and disorder.”**

**—Christopher Mofya**

ing a strategic impact in reducing criminality and enhancing security in camps for the displaced, Darfur’s security situation continues to be unpredictable, particularly with competition over scarce natural resources leading to new tribal clashes and criminality. As a result of these outbreaks of violence, new waves of displaced people are seeking protection in the region’s already crowded IDP camps, whose medical services and basic facilities are already overburdened.

Compounding these problems is the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement. Those armed movements that have not yet signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) continue to hold out, making formal disarmament and demobilisation activities impossible. In this context, community-policing activities represent one layer of a multitiered approach the Mission is taking in helping Darfur move slowly but steadily toward a comprehensive and lasting peace. ■

## The Culture of Tea in Darfur

Tea, a vital part of the daily life here, is typically taken in the morning and afternoon, when Darfuris gather to socialize and discuss family issues, politics and the news of the day.

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU



In El Fasher, North Darfur, Ms. Maryam Ahmed prepares tea for her customers. Ms. Ahmed, who works as a “tea lady,” says she started her business more than three years ago, and sells different kinds of tea to many customers throughout the day. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

**T**ea is a national drink in Sudan, and holds a special position in the customs and traditions of the Sudanese. As Sudanese, the people of Darfur cherish their tea times as a vital part of their daily lives. It is a common saying here among Darfuris that one cannot function without a morning cup of tea. In the afternoon, tea is considered to be both refreshment and a relief to the body.

According to historians, tea, which is widely known in Arabic as *Shai*, was first introduced into Sudan by the Arabs through trading and also by the British, who ruled the country during the colonial era. As a result of these and other influences, tea has become an essential aspect of Sudanese culture, and is widely taken at every meal or special occasion.

A great deal of prestige is attached to the taking of tea by Darfuris, even to such an extent that people here have coined the phrase *Haflat Shai*, which translates in English as “tea ceremony.” Such ceremonies are organized for special occasions, such as to celebrate a newly wedded couple. In a tea ceremony for newlyweds, for example, friends and family contribute money and give gifts.



A Darfuri drinks tea in the morning in El Fasher, North Darfur. It is customary for Darfuris to drink tea at regular intervals, especially in the morning and afternoon, to refresh the body and socialize with friends and family. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

“Some of my best times are those I spend with my family at tea sessions. They allow us the opportunity to think, listen and talk to our relatives, and give us the time to listen to stories of the past from our elders.”

—Hassan Abdullah

It is common for people to serve a cup of tea to visitors or to anybody who has just dropped in. Tea is served at most workplaces in Darfur, and tea breaks in the morning and afternoon are considered to be important moments for socializing and discussing family issues or politics.

A day for a Darfuri usually begins with a cup or two of tea, immediately after waking up, while breakfast is eaten around 11:00 a.m. Breakfast here typically consists of beans, fresh vegetables, meat, bread and *kisra*, a light porridge

made from either maize, sorghum or wheat. Also, millet is common in these meals. It is prepared as a solid porridge called *asida*, and is typically consumed with vegetable soup.

“This breakfast meal is our main diet and is repeated at either lunch or dinner, while tea or coffee without milk is always served before and after the meal to help balance the food and to feel a sense of satisfaction,” says Mr. Siddik Omer, a resident of El Fasher, North Darfur.

Such is the daily life of most Darfu-

ris, who cherish their cups of tea as part and parcel of their culture and customs. Restaurants have various brands of tea listed on their menus. And it is common to see tea stands on the street corners in Darfur’s towns and villages. The tea business is thriving here, especially the small tea businesses that are mostly run by women, who are called tea ladies, or *sit al sbai*.

Tea ladies are found in all parts of Darfur, inside cultural centres and universities, and in all marketplaces. They provide tea at relatively low prices, typically one Sudanese pound (15 U.S. cents) for a small cup of tea. However, tea is not the only item provided by the tea ladies. These tea ladies have a special place in Darfuri culture as confidantes for young lovers, as advisers to young people, as conversation partners for civil servants and as friends to those who are unemployed. The tea ladies listen, smile, pour another cup of the popu-

lar beverage and offer their advice and counselling.

Women in all parts of Darfur own and run these small tea businesses. They are normally found on street corners, usually under the shade of trees, or in offices and marketplaces. The tea ladies start their business early in the morning by setting up their table, plastic chairs and traditionally made wooden stools. Then, they light their fires to boil water and arrange their jars of assorted spices, making sure the sugar is readily available, as Darfuris love their cups of tea to be well sweetened.

A popular tea lady in El Fasher, Ms. Amira Mohamed Ibrahim, says she started her business more than eight years ago, selling different kinds of tea, including black, red (known as Hibiscus tea in English) and green. She flavours her tea with spices, such as mint, ginger and garlic. And she also serves coffee.

Ms. Ibrahim is a widow and has five children. She uses proceeds from her small business to support her family. "I make about 150 to 200 Sudanese pounds per day, but my daily profit depends on the turnout of my customers," she says, nothing that she is thankful her business has become a popular spot.

She is typically very busy each day with people drinking tea and coffee and chatting away around her. Among her frequent customers are local civil servants, traders, drivers, students and UNAMID personnel. She says she hopes that one day she will be able to expand her business and serve local Sudanese delicacies to her clients.

Darfuris consider it not only customary but also a duty to offer a cup of tea to any visitor to their homes, offices or places of business. "We are concerned about the welfare of our guests and will frequently insist that the guest take second helpings of the food and tea to make us feel happy and satisfied with the visit," says Mr. Adam Ahmad, a mobile phone technician who works in El Fasher market.

Another significant feature of the tea culture in Darfur is the tradition of holding tea sessions with family members or community elders. This is done

with the sole purpose of the session serving as a platform to discuss solutions to family, community and national problems.

"At the family level, parents and elders use the tea sessions to enlighten, educate and advise children," says Mr. Hamid Ali, a civil servant working at a local Government office in El Fasher. "Since I was 10 years old, I have been benefiting a lot from these sessions."

Mr. Ali says he can still remember how his grandfather used to encourage him to keep having tea and to keep sitting in tea sessions, so he would learn things he did not know. In addition to the sessions serving as a platform where people can discuss family or community problems, they also provide an atmosphere that encourages sharing daily news and developments around the world.

"Some of my best times are those I spend with my family at tea sessions," says another civil servant, Mr. Hassan Abdullah. "They allow us the opportu-

nity to think, listen and talk to our relatives, and give us the time to listen to stories of the past from our elders."

It is considered discourteous for visitors to decline to drink the tea served to them. Darfuris say that if visitors are served meals without a cup of tea, they have been "served nothing" and the visit is incomplete. Therefore, families in Darfur do everything in their power to ensure their guests are offered tea, first to welcome them and also as a last drink before their departure.

While durable peace remains an elusive goal in this troubled region of the world, many fine minds are coming together each day across Darfur to discuss, debate and problem-solve. With tea having such a special place in Darfuri culture, it could very well be that around the tables of the tea ladies and in the thousands of tea sessions and tea ceremonies held across Darfur each day, a durable solution to the many problems plaguing the region will be found. ■

**"At the family level, parents and elders use the tea sessions to enlighten, educate and advise children. Since I was 10 years old, I have been benefiting a lot from these sessions."**

**—Hamid Ali**

*Tea served on a platter in traditional Darfuri style. A great deal of prestige is attached to the taking of tea by Darfuris, even to such an extent that people here have coined the phrase *Haflat Shai*, which translates in English as "tea ceremony." Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.*



## A Medical Clinic Rises from the Ashes

In response to the Zam Zam camp for displaced people in North Darfur losing one of its medical clinics in an accidental fire earlier this year, UNAMID constructed two durable tents that are providing a clean space in which doctors can treat their patients.

BY ALBERT GONZÁLEZ FARRAN

**T**he Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur is the temporary home for more than 100,000 people. During the past several months, this camp, located just a few kilometres south of El Fasher, has been growing rapidly with new arrivals displaced from violent clashes across Darfur. For all these displaced, the camp has been operating with only four medical clinics run by local nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO).

One of these clinics burned to the ground in February 2013, creating a difficult situation for the families who were relying on it for regular medical assistance. Since the incident, the two doctors and seven nurses from the NGO that ran the clinic continued to attend to the needs of more than one hundred patients each day in a temporary shelter constructed from sticks and branches.

The situation drew the attention of UNAMID's Humanitarian Division, which began working to build a health facility that could provide a better environment in which the doctors and nurses working for NGO Humanitarian Assistance and Development (HAD) could meet with their patients. The project, highlighted in this photo essay, consisted of installing two big tents—50 and 100 square meters, respectively.

“This is a small-scale project,” says UNA-

MID Humanitarian Affairs Officer Zurab Elzarov. “But it will have a significant impact on the community and represents an excellent example of a joint collaborative approach to the implementation of projects between UNAMID, WHO, HAD and the State Ministry of Health.”

Dr. Ismail Abdurrahman and Nurse Insaf Yasser, both of whom work in the clinic, say the new facility will serve to protect them from Darfur's harsh weather as they meet with their patients. Darfur's mostly arid and hot environment changes seasonally, and includes heavy rains and sand storms.

Zam Zam resident Ms. Amina Harum, a young mother displaced from Tarni, a village west of El Fasher, has been relying on the clinic, which is a 20 minute walk from her shelter in Zam Zam. Now that it has been rebuilt, she says she is happy to have her baby receive medical care in what she calls a “more suitable” location. “This will protect us much better,” she says.

In addition to working on such projects to assist displaced communities that have immediate needs, UNAMID has facilitated the implementation of dozens of quick-impact projects across Darfur to help rebuild schools, community centres, medical clinics and other critical infrastructure that has been damaged or destroyed during the long years of conflict in the region. ■



1

On 20 May 2013, a child stands on the spot in the Zam Zam camp where the original medical clinic stood before the incident in February 2013 that burned it to the ground.

2

On 20 May 2013, women wait outside a temporary clinic created with sticks and branches to provide at least some shelter to doctors and nurses as they work with their patients.

3

On 20 May 2013, Dr. Ismail Abdurrahman, from the local nongovernmental organization Humanitarian Assistance and Development, attends to a woman and her baby in the temporary clinic.







4

4 On 20 May 2013, UNAMID staff members unload construction materials to begin work on the new medical clinic to replace the one that was burned to the ground.



5

5 On 30 May 2013, patients wait under a tree to be seen by a medical team that typically treats more than 100 patients each day at this location.



6



7

6 On 30 May 2013, UNAMID staff members erect two new tents—50 and 100 square meters, respectively. The construction, spearheaded by UNAMID’s Humanitarian Division, took two months to complete.

7 On 30 May 2013, Dr. Abdurrahman attends to a child outdoors while UNAMID staff members work nearby to install a new medical clinic.

8 Medical professionals meet patients in one of the completed tents built in June by UNAMID to replace a clinic that had burned to the ground.

9 On 30 May 2013, Dr. Abdurrahman and Pharmacist Marya Musa inspect one of the nearly completed tents that will serve as the new medical clinic in the Zam Zam camp.



8



9

## Darfur's Art: An Interview with Historian Gibreel Abdulaziz

To gain insight into how the region's arts developed, *Voices of Darfur* talked with Gibreel Abdulaziz—a teacher and a scholar—who recently published a book about El Fasher.

BY ALA MAYYAH



On 5 June 2013, academic and historian Gibreel Abdulaziz is pictured in his house in Khartoum, Sudan. Mr. Abdulaziz currently works as a consultant for the Government of Sudan on matters of culture and history. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

**M**r. Gibreel Abdulaziz—a teacher, a scholar, and a historian—was born in El Fasher, North Darfur, in 1945, and has witnessed, first-hand, many changes in his hometown. After finishing high school in El Fasher, Mr. Abdulaziz studied education in the Baght El Ridha Central Teachers College, and continued his studies at Khartoum University, where he graduated with a degree in history, English and education.

Following his academic pursuits, Mr. Abdulaziz returned to his hometown, where he worked in politics and civil society. His long career has included several

prestigious positions, including Chief of State Council, Minister of Education and Minister of Social and Culture Affairs, all in North Darfur.

Recently, Mr. Abdulaziz published a 700-page book on the history of El Fasher and its development over the years. The book documents historic Darfuri figures, including artists and intellectuals. In an interview, *Voices of Darfur* talked with Mr. Abdulaziz about the history and development of art in Darfur.

**Voices of Darfur: First, could you tell us a bit about the early civilizations in Darfur?**

**Abdulaziz:** The first civilizations that appeared in Darfur were in the Palaeolithic era. Civilization in the area arose in the form of agriculture, husbandry, fishing and trading with Egypt through the path named the “Forty Road,” which referred to the 40-day duration of the trip, as well as through trading with the Waday Sultanate (modern-day Chad), Libya and southern Sudan, where the hunting of elephants, lions and deer took place. In addition, exchange of leather, ivory, honey and ebony were among the active trades in that period.

Some inscriptions from these ancient

civilizations still exist on cave walls and rocks in many areas in Darfur, such as in Jebel Marra and Jebel Si. These engravings depict animals, tools, and the fishing and agricultural activities carried out in that era. The same form of civilization appeared in other African countries, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Niger and Senegal.

**VoD: Were there some clear forms of art during that era in Darfur?**

**Abdulaziz:** The first art forms were some handcrafts made of palm fronds and wool, also aesthetic pieces of drawing, and inscriptions on wood and leather, even on metal items such as swords and spear shafts. There was also group dancing, in the shape of expressive body movements. Such activities appeared after the Stone Age and continued to develop and vary with time. Some remains of art pieces still exist and are maintained in local museums, such as the Ali Dinar museum in El Fasher, and in the Nyala and El Geneina museums. Other similar ancient remains can be found in Mellit, Kutum, Um Kadada, Kabkabiya, and El Daein, and are maintained by the administration offices of these localities.

**VoD: What about paper and colour? When were they used in Darfur?**

**Abdulaziz:** In the era of the Sultans, imported paper from Egypt became common for writing verses of the Holy Koran and words of the Prophet, as well as for general documents. Wood was used mostly as a medium for drawing. As for colour, only natural types were used. Arabic calligraphy and inscription on fabric were the most common fine art forms during that period.

**VoD: What social factors from history have had the biggest impact on Darfur's art today?**

**Abdulaziz:** People of Darfur lived in similar social and economic situations during the three main Sultanates—Al Dajou, Tunjer and Fure—which existed from the 19th century up to the modern era. As people lived together in peace, affection and brotherhood without social classification, cultural performances were common, including music and

**“Performance arts and other art types developed simultaneously in Darfur throughout the years. The difference is that performance arts are tribal in their nature and done collectively, while works of fine art are done individually.”**

dance as folkloric creative activities for entertainment.

Although each tribe had its own traditional group dance, neighbouring tribes used to invite each other for their auspicious occasions, such as weddings, and all attendees would participate in the traditional dances, regardless of the dance's origin. Also, people from the invited tribes would stay for several days under the hospitality of the hosting tribe. The celebration activities mostly included group dances and horse and camel races, in which all would join joyfully.

**VoD: So did musical performance develop earlier than other arts? What about musical instruments?**

**Abdulaziz:** Performance arts and other art types developed simultaneously in Darfur throughout the years. The difference is that performance arts are tribal in their nature and done collectively, while works of fine art are done individually. As for musical instruments, drums made of wood and leather were among the first instruments played in Darfur. Some other instruments were played locally, such as the oboe and the kita, which sounds like a whistle. There was also the kurbi, which is similar to the modern Arabic flute.

These instruments have existed since the Nubian civilization, while string instruments such as the uod and guitar, came to Darfur in the 1940s. In 1940, two brothers from Khartoum, Burie and Ismael Abdul Mu'ien, came to El Fasher to teach people how to play the uod.

**VoD: Were there any specific factors that contributed to the development and proliferation of fine arts in Darfur?**

**Abdulaziz:** In the 19th century, aca-

demic education for fine arts started to emerge in Sudan, and similarly in Chad, Egypt, Libya, Central Africa, Nigeria and Cameroon. People from Darfur mixed with these neighbouring nations through trade and scholarship. So academic study had a significant impact on fine art in Darfur, as it did in other parts of Sudan, where the art of Arabic calligraphy, for example, was common, as were drawing and engraving on stone and leather. New painting styles, including abstract styles, also began to appear locally.

El Fasher, where almost all the 170 Darfuri tribes exist, was the most important city in terms of development of arts in Darfur, including theatre arts. For example, the first theatre play was produced in El Fasher in 1927. It was first titled “The Barmakids Calamity,” and then became known as “Abbasa,” after one of the play's main characters. That play inspired many others to produce plays on the same subject. It was produced in a primary school established in 1917—the first school in El Fasher.

In 1942, Shakespeare's plays were performed by various students in El Fasher. These plays included Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, King Lear and Julius Caesar. Until the 1970s, theatre arts were more active in El Fasher than they were in the following years. About 68 long plays were presented by large groups. Some local plays were written by well-known Sudanese writers and were staged in primary and secondary schools in Darfur. Generally, plays in Darfur have been conducted in annual school activities.

Many good fine artists come from El Fasher. These artists include Adam Isa, who graduated from the well-known



On 5 June 2013, academic and historian Gibreel Abdulaziz is pictured in his house in Khartoum, Sudan, with his family. Mr. Abdulaziz's long career has involved several prestigious positions, including Chief of State Council, Minister of Education and Minister of Social and Culture Affairs, all in North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

**“El Fasher, where almost all the 170 Darfuri tribes exist, was the most important city in terms of development of arts in Darfur, including theatre arts. For example, the first theatre play was produced in El Fasher in 1927.”**

institution Bakht Al Ridha. He was considered at one time the best in Sudan, and was selected by a publishing house in Khartoum, in 1947, for illustrating literacy books produced for children and grown-ups across the county. Some of his sons and grandsons today are fine artists too.

**VoD: How much of an influence does the natural environment of Darfur have on the artists here?**

**Abdulaziz:** There is a clear and direct link between nature and fine arts in Darfur. For example, in the area of Al Sabna in South Darfur, where there are lots of huge trees and large animals, we find that artists in that area depict these elements of the natural environment in their paintings. But in the desert areas, painters reflect components found in the nature there, such as sand and birds and sometimes caves and desert plants.

**VoD: During the Sultans era, was there a period that is considered bet-**

**ter than others in terms of art improvement?**

**Abdulaziz:** The period of Sultan Ali Dinar is characterized by an abundance of calligraphers and pieces of art with attractive inscriptions, whether clothes, spearheads, swords or brass instruments. The Sultan's palace was decorated with many designs and creative inscriptions. He was the first one to have an artificial pond within his palace premises. Fish were brought for the pond from the Arabian Sea in pottery. And he established a zoo in El Fasher. It contained tigers, lions, elephants, deer and a variety of birds, and it became a tourist attraction for the people of Darfur.

**VoD: The 1960s was rich artistically in many countries around the world. Was it the same in Darfur in that period?**

**Abdulaziz:** Yes. In the 60s, a significant breakthrough emerged in the field of arts, literature and theatre. Male and

female writers participated in the improvement of society. There was a recovery and clear interest in art production in Sudan, generally. Also, there were festivals, such as the notable festival in 1962, attended by all states of Sudan. In addition, there were singing and drama shows held every Thursday in the National Theatre, which were followed by people from all over the country.

**VoD: What has been the role of women in art development in Darfur's history?**

**Abdulaziz:** Women have always participated in the arts through their work as teachers for art in schools and institutes. Some have had important input in theatre, and others, such as the Hakamat, in the musical arts. Also, there have been notable female Darfuri poets. Some types of art are done and improved by women alone. These arts include drawing with henna and inscription on fabric. In general, Darfuri women have participated in several art activities, especially those women who have had a university education in art, which boosts their ability and creativity in various activities, including participation in local and national festivals.

**VoD: In your opinion, how can art and cultural activities in Darfur contribute effectively to social development while keeping a balance between tradition and contemporary society?**

**Abdulaziz:** Festivals and cultural activities can be very effective in perpetuating art, where new works of creative artists gain exposure. The balance between contemporary society and tradition can be maintained through promoting the heritage among people in general and among artists in particular, as well as openness to art works from around the world so artists here can gain experience and familiarity with new methods.

Today, TV satellites and the Internet are the most important means for disseminating and exposing people to knowledge in all fields, including culture and arts. These means are available to many Darfuri artists and intellectuals, giving them a chance to see the developments of arts elsewhere. ■




*On 5 June 2013, academic and historian Gibreel Abdulaziz is pictured in his house in Khartoum, Sudan. Mr. Abdulaziz currently works as a consultant for the Government of Sudan on matters of culture and history. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.*




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