

UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur

VOICES

of Darfur

NOVEMBER 2012

Peace Performance

An Interview
with Theatre Director
Samaha Abdul Muni'em

The Darfur Joint Assessment Mission

*Development strategy
for the region's future*

Economic Downturn Dampens Darfur Trade

*Finding small signs of
economic recovery*

New Stoves Protect Women, Environment

*Cutting firewood
consumption in half*



AFRICAN UNION - UNITED NATIONS
MISSION IN DARFUR
(UNAMID)



On 18 July 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, members of the theatre group "Ashwaq Al Salam" present a piece of theatre drama during the opening ceremony of the new Cultural Centre and Library in El Fasher. UNAMID sponsored the rehabilitation of the library through a quick-impact project. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm pleased to introduce the November issue of *Voices of Darfur*, which continues in the new 32-page format, giving the magazine the ability to tell the story of UNAMID and the people of Darfur with more in-depth coverage. The current issue, 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.

This issue includes two interviews, first an exclusive with the Chief of Civil Affairs, conducted by Mr. Abdullahi Shuaibu at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur. Mr. Lameck Kawiche described how the Mission has made progress in building trust among different communities. Ms. Ala Mayyahi conducted the second interview, our cover feature, with Theatre Director Samiha Abdul Muni'em. In the interview, Ms. Muni'em talked with *Voices* about her past productions and her current work, and shared her thoughts on the impact of theatre drama on the peace process.

In the viewpoint published in this issue, Ms. Margaret Masenda-Simbi, the Chief Advisor in UNAMID's HIV&AIDS Section, offers her thoughts on World AIDS Day 2012, and appeals to readers to get involved in the struggle against the disease. Ms. Masenda-Simbi points out that it does not matter what the magnitude of our personal actions are, but rather that we have made a contribution.

In "Darfur Joint Assessment Mission: The Journey to Development," Mr. Abdullahi Shuaibu offers an in-depth look at one of the most important mechanisms for moving the peace process steadily forward. As an important aspect of the new peace agreement, the DJAM process identifies reconstruction and development needs for Darfur. The process is expected to form the strategic basis for an international donor conference scheduled to be held in Doha, Qatar, in January 2013.

In "Violence Displaces Those Already Displaced," Ms. Sharon Lukunka and Ms. Guiomar Pau Solé write about the August 2012 series of attacks in and around the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons. The unrest forced the Darfuris living in the camp to flee from their homes and seek safe haven in the North Darfur town of Kutum.

In "Economic Downturn Dampens Darfur Trade, Pushes Prices Higher," Ms. Sharon Lukunka writes about how the recent economic downturn in Sudan has taken its toll on businesses in Darfur, resulting in prices that have broadly affected traders and consumers alike. Finally, in "Fuel-Efficient Stoves Protect Women, Environment," Mr. Emadeldin Rijal writes about how a new kind of locally made stove is making an impact on the risks associated with firewood collection and is helping to preserve the environment in the process.

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.

Kirk L. Kroeker
Head of Publications

ON THE COVER



Theatre Director Samiha Abdul Muni'em poses with members of the drama group "Ashwaq Al Salam." Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 18 October 2012 in the Abu Shouk IDP camp in North Darfur, a boy waits at a World Food Programme centre for food distribution. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

VOICES

of Darfur

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Joint Commission Meeting Focuses on Security, Verification of Forces

BY RANIA ABDULRAHMAN AND GUIOMAR PAU SOLÉ



On 15 October in Khartoum, UNAMID Acting Joint Special Representative Aichatou Mindaoudou addresses the participants of the second meeting of the Joint Commission on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

The second meeting of the Joint Commission, which took place in Khartoum on 15 October, focused on the implementation of final security arrangements of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) and identified the inconclusive verification of the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) as the main challenge delaying the process.

The Commission decided that the parties, the Government of Sudan and LJM, under the supervision of the Ceasefire Commission, should conclude the verification exercise and conduct a desk review of the outcome by 15 November 2012.

“The impasse in the verification exercise will significantly impede the establishment of a secure environment,” said Ms. Aichatou Mindaoudou, UNAMID Acting Joint Special Representative and Chair-

person of the Joint Commission. “I urge the Government of Sudan and the LJM to demonstrate commitment and flexibility in efforts to reach an agreement in the way forward to concluding the verification of the LJM forces and strength, in the interest of peace and security in Darfur.”

The Acting JSR noted the increasing number of security-related incidents in North Darfur, including high-casualty armed clashes between members of different communities, and called attention to the need for urgent disarmament and disbandment of militia groups and illegally armed persons.

Ms. Mindaoudou acknowledged the progress made so far by the Darfur Regional Authority, in collaboration with the international community, in leading the process to assess the need in Darfur for

economic recovery, development and poverty eradication. She called on the Government of Sudan to continue to cooperate with the international partners and to provide them with access to all areas of Darfur in the interest of peace and development.

The Joint Commission is established to resolve disputes referred to it by the Ceasefire Commission. Its functions include the follow-up of the implementation of the permanent ceasefire and the final security arrangements, as stipulated in the DDPD, and the arbitration of irregularities and violations.

The Commission consists of representatives of the Government of Sudan, LJM, the State of Qatar, the League of Arab States and the European Union. Canada, China and Norway are observers on the Commission. ■

Rebel Group Agrees to Peace Process Negotiations

BY GUIOMAR PAU SOLÉ

On 22 October, representatives from the Government of Sudan and members of Justice and Equality Movement Sudan signed a declaration affirming their commitment to the peace process, the immediate cessation of hostilities and the resumption of negotiations to achieve a comprehensive conflict settlement on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).

The two parties, led by Sudanese Minister of State in the Presidency Amin Hassan Omer and JEM-Sudan President of the Interim Military Council Mohammad Bashar Ahmed, agreed to talks after the holiday of Eid Al-Adha.

The declaration was signed in Doha, Qatar, where the delegations held intensive consultations from 17 - 22 October 2012 in the presence of Qatari Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud and African Union-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator a.i. Ms. Aichatou Mindaoudou.

In a statement issued by Mr. Al-Mahmoud and Ms. Mindaoudou, the mediation participants called upon the other nonsignatory movements to join the peace process with a view to alleviating the suffering of the population and restoring peace to all parts of Darfur. ■

Several Peacekeepers Killed in Attacks on UNAMID patrols

BY CPID STAFF



The Armoured Personnel Carrier shown here was damaged on 17 October during the Hashaba attack in which one peacekeeper from South Africa died and three others were injured. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Five UNAMID peacekeepers died and 11 were injured in two different attacks on Mission patrols, one on 2 October in El Geneina, West Darfur, and the other on 17 October near Hashaba, North Darfur.

The first incident, which involved a Nigerian military

patrol, occurred approximately two kilometres from the Mission's regional headquarters in El Geneina. UNAMID personnel, who were heavily fired upon from several directions by unidentified assailants, returned fire. Four peacekeepers were killed and eight were injured in the ambush.

In the second attack, one peacekeeper from South Africa died and three others were injured while a UNAMID convoy was on its way from Kutum to Hashaba North, 56 kilometres north-east of Kutum, to assess the situation following recent reports of violence in that area. The 17 October mission, consisting of military, police and civilians, came

under a combination of automatic and mortar fire by unidentified assailants, also returned fire.

The Mission leadership, as well as the African Union and United Nations, strongly condemned both attacks, and called on the Government of Sudan to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"These attacks will not shake our resolve to fulfil our mandate and help the people of Darfur," said Acting Joint Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator a.i., Ms. Aichatou Mind-aoudou.

Since the initial deployment of UNAMID on 31 December 2007, 43 peacekeepers have been killed as a result of hostile actions. ■

El Daein, East Darfur



On 8 October 2012, a child receives a vaccination against Meningitis at the Al Neem camp for internally displaced persons in El Daein, East Darfur. A vaccination campaign against Meningitis, organized by the Government of Sudan and the World Health Organization, targeted 16.9 million people in the five Darfur states and in others Sudanese states. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

UNAMID Drills Water Source for Community in Darfur

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

As part of addressing the scarcity of water in Darfur, UNAMID completed a water borehole in Gereida, South Darfur early in September 2012. The 236 metre well is expected to provide more than 16,000 litres of water per hour, which will be shared between the Mission and the Darfuris in the area. This is the first water source drilled using the Mission's own equipment.

"Recognizing that lack of access to water is one of the major drivers of the conflict in Darfur, the objective of UNAMID's water source search programme is to minimize conflicts over the scarcity of water resources," said Mr. Emmanuel Mollel, Head of UNAMID's Water and Environmental Protection section.

In the past, the Mission relied on UNAMID's engineering components from China, Ethiopia and Thailand, as well as on local contractors with drilling capabilities, to implement water projects. One of the goals of the new borehole programme, in addition to facilitating water access for Darfuris, is for the Mission to be more self-sufficient with its water supply.

The 2011 International Water Conference focused on addressing water scarcity in Darfur and how to determine the equitable use and management of this limited resource to help build peace in the region. As part of the strategy that emerged from that conference, UNAMID has been partnering with UN agencies, international organisations and Sudanese institutions in mobilizing resources needed to implement an integrated water resource program.

Mr. Mollel explained that,



The new 236 metre well in Gereida, South Darfur, is expected to provide more than 16,000 litres of water per hour, which will be shared between the Mission and the Darfuris in the area.

as one aspect of this strategy, the Mission is using innovative methods to store water. These methods include rainwater harvesting from roofs and rehabili-

tation of *bafirs*, or dams, to trap surface rain water during the rainy season.

UNAMID is drilling similar water wells in El Fasher,

North Darfur, and El Daein, East Darfur. The Mission is planning to drill more than one dozen water wells throughout Darfur. ■

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Yala Nebni Darfur, produced by Darfuris for the Darfuris community, is part of UNAMID's outreach activities to create awareness about the Mission's mandate and related work.

Significant Step by Darfur Armed Group to End Use of Child Soldiers

BY RANIA ABDULRAHMAN

An action plan to put an end to the use of child soldiers has been put forward by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The initial plan was completed in meetings between JEM and former UNAMID Joint Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator *a.i.* Ibrahim Gambari in Stadtschlaining, Austria in July 2012.

The plan, submitted to the United Nations on 25 September, includes a commitment to the immediate release of children within JEM ranks, the prevention of recruitment and re-recruitment of children, and granting un-

hindered access to the UN to monitor and verify compliance. In addition, JEM committed to designating a high-level focal point to liaise with the UN and to submit reports on the implementation of the plan.

Five other Darfur's groups have made the same commitment: the Sudan Liberation Army/Free Will, JEM/Peace Wing, Sudan Liberation Army/Abu Gasim, Sudan Liberation Army/Historical Leadership and the Liberation and Justice Movement.

"UNAMID acknowledges and commends the

efforts made by JEM to adhere to the international conventions that prohibit the involvement of children in armed conflicts," said UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (Operations & Management) Mohamed B. Yonis.

On 11 September 2012, JEM issued a Commander Order prohibiting recruitment and use of child soldiers. Seven other armed movements issued similar orders previously, contributing to a decrease in the number of child soldiers in the region.

The UN Security Council demanded in resolution 2068,

adopted on 19 September 2012, that parties to armed conflict immediately halt the use and abuse of children and to take special measures to protect children. The Council expressed concerns that certain perpetrators "persist in committing violations and abuses against children in situations of armed conflict in open disregard of the resolutions on the matter."

The UN Secretary-General's latest report on children and armed conflict, released in June 2012, named 52 parties on its "list of shame" of those who recruit and use children. ■

El Fasher, North Darfur



On 24 October 2012, UNAMID, UN agencies and the people of Darfur gathered in El Fasher, North Darfur, to commemorate the 67th anniversary of the UN with a special parade, cultural dances, peace songs and exhibitions to promote the principles of the organisation. Similar events were held throughout Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Shagra, North Darfur



On 18 October 2012, women in the North Darfur village of Shagra demonstrate the cereal treating process during a visit of ambassadors from European Union countries. The UN World Food Programme opened a centre in Shagra to train women on food processing and building fuel-efficient stoves. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Darfur's Women Discuss UN Resolution 1325

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the *Wali's* (Governor) Advisors on Women and Children in the five Darfur states, UNAMID organized a series of events to highlight United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The events, which concluded on 9 October in El Fasher, North Darfur, highlighted the role of women's civil society organizations in contributing to peace building and the prevention of armed conflict.

The events brought together women representatives from civil society groups, nongovernmental organizations and internally

displaced persons, as well as local authorities and UNAMID officials. Participants reviewed recommendations and achievements made in the implementation of Resolution 1325 in the region.

During the 9 October event, UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (Operations and Management) Mohamed B. Yonis called attention to the role women's organizations play in contributing to the peace process and fostering confidence between communities. "In Darfur, much progress has been made but more remains to be done," he said, adding that to build a viable society, it is essential to give equal opportunities to all.

He also said there is a need to support and promote the efforts of women in peace-making and peace building.

The head of UNAMID's Gender Advisory Unit, Ms. Yegerawork Angagaw, explained that the Darfur events provided an opportunity for women to assume full ownership of Resolution 1325 and cement their commitment to ensuring its implementation.

The Deputy Wali of North Darfur, Mr. Alfateh Abdulaziz, expressed his support in facilitating efforts by women's groups in Darfur. He added that the Government will adopt the outcome of the deliberations and work with UNAMID to

implement the Resolution.

The event's participants identified the progress made so far and the impact of the Resolution on their daily lives in the areas of protection, participation in the peace process, women's rights and socioeconomic empowerment. They made several recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Resolution, including reaching out to women in rural areas and sensitising them on gender-related issues and on their role in the prevention and resolution of conflict in their communities.

All participants signed a Declaration on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Darfur. ■

Darfur Joint Assessment Mission: The Journey to Development

The Darfur Joint Assessment Mission is a process, outlined in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, to highlight the need for early recovery and development initiatives in the region.

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU



More than five hundred people, including high-level representatives of the Government of the Sudan, Darfur rebel movements, civil society representatives, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and members of Sudanese political parties attended the five-day All Darfur Stakeholders Conference in Doha, Qatar, which finished on 31 May 2011. Several working groups debated specific issues, such as power and wealth sharing, justice and reconciliation, human rights and peaceful coexistence, and the return of IDPs and refugees. The outcome the discussions formed the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Photo by Olivier Chassot, UNAMID.

The Darfur Joint Assessment Mission (DJAM), a mechanism designed to identify early recovery and long-term reconstruction and development needs for Darfur, was initially mandated in the now-defunct Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed in Abuja, Ni-

geria, on 5 May 2006. At that time, the DJAM process was led by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi, with support from the international community, particularly the United Nations, the World Bank and the African Development

Bank. But with the failure of the DPA to ensure peace, security and stability in Darfur, the DJAM mechanism did not come into play.

With the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) on 14 July 2011, and in accordance with pro-

visions contained in Article 32 (Chapter III), the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), an entity stipulated in the DDPD, reactivated the DJAM mechanism. The process launched in May 2012 to highlight and facilitate needs related to economic recovery and development in the post-conflict reconstruction phase of the peace agreement.

The DRA is currently the principal DJAM organ for preparing and implementing a broad-scale assessment about Darfur's development needs. Findings from the DJAM process are expected to form the basis for an international donor conference scheduled to be held in Doha, Qatar, in January 2013.

The DJAM process is designed to address, in as comprehensive a manner as possible, the needs of all communities in Darfur. Those needs, by any measure, are significant. Observers have noted that the entire population of Darfur, estimated at about 7.5 million, has been affected by the conflict that started in 2003. Members of every community in Darfur, whether rural farmers, nomadic pastoralists, public sector workers or urban dwellers, have had their livelihoods disrupted in some way. There are about 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), 80 per cent of whom have lost everything they owned. An additional quarter of a million are refugees, most of them living in Chad.

Across Darfur, infrastructure has been systematically damaged or destroyed, and families have lost their homes and their means of making a living. Many Darfur communities lack water sources, basic services and markets. Existing basic services have either been overstretched or have collapsed completely due to lack of maintenance, while trading between communities has been

curtailed by the security situation and an inability to move freely between settled areas.

During the conflict in Darfur, houses were burned, cattle and small livestock were stolen or killed, crops were deliberately damaged, bags of seeds and irrigation pumps were looted, and water systems and agro-forestry systems destroyed. This devastation has been exacerbated by competing land claims in most parts of Darfur, with many refugees and IDPs now facing problems related to returning to occupied areas that they once called home.

Most IDPs in camps have little or no access to economic opportunities and are highly dependent on humanitarian

“These recovery efforts were intended to lay the foundation for, and also to speed up the transition from, relief assistance to sustainable development.”

—Ahmed Rufai Abubakar

aid for their daily subsistence. Income-generating activities available to IDPs include wage labour, brick-making and trade in food aid. For women, especially, the conflict has been difficult. The collection and sale of firewood and grasses have become important sources of income for women, although the practice puts them at an increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence.

Even prior to the conflict, Darfur faced chronic underdevelopment. There was limited access for vehicles because roads were in a state of disrepair or were completely impassable at certain times of the year. Public buildings were dilapidated, and 85 per cent of schools were built with local materials and were not maintained. Water systems were broken down in the absence of service or maintenance.

Under the DDPD, the Darfur Regional Authority, chaired by Liberation

and Justice Movement (LJM) leader Dr. Tigani Seisi, is required to address these aspects of Darfur through recovery and development initiatives. The DRA is being assisted in this task by partner organisations and countries. These include UNAMID, the UN Development Programme, which is the lead UN agency for the exercise, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Union, the US Agency for International Development, the UK Department for International Development, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, other UN Country Team members, and the Governments of Northern Ireland, Sudan and Qatar.

In November 2012, the DJAM technical survey mission concluded the collation of information on issues related to economic recovery, development and poverty eradication needs in Darfur. In September and October 2012, the DJAM teams consulted with Ministries and civil-society representatives in the five Darfur state capitals, and conducted workshops in different parts of Darfur and in Khartoum, with the participation of 1,420 civil society and Government representatives. About 25 per cent of them were Darfuri women.

As part of the analysis process, the DJAM technical teams gathered information on 10 segments of the Darfur economy: agriculture; basic social services; fiscal management; governance; infrastructure development; natural resources; peace and security; private sector development; return, reintegration and resettlement; and rule of law. The information compiled on these segments is expected to form the basis for strategic recommendations related to peace, growth and development in the region.

The findings and recommendations of the DJAM process will be presented,

“The aim of this DJAM process is to present a diagnostic format for the current situation and key challenges to development in Darfur, while identifying specific priorities and interventions for sustaining peace and prosperity for the people of Darfur.”

—Tadjadine Niam

in full, to the donor conference participants in January 2013, explains UNAMID Principal Political Advisor Ahmed Rufai Abubakar. “These recovery efforts were intended to lay the foundation for, and also to speed up the transition from, relief assistance to sustainable development,” he says. “UNAMID is playing a substantive role in the whole process, through membership in various technical groups, and also playing a leading role in some of the committees.”

Mr. Abubakar says that the donors at the upcoming conference will contribute to a trust fund for Darfur reconstruction

and development projects. The fund, known as the “donor trust fund,” will be managed by the donors in collaboration with the DRA, which will serve as the implementing agency of the post-conflict recovery activities. It is expected that the DJAM process will identify appropriate projects to address the recovery priorities of all Darfur communities. Projects are expected to include skills development in new technologies, vocational training for alternative livelihoods and education in resource allocation, among other initiatives.

In discussing the DJAM process,

the DRA Minister of Reconstruction, Development and Infrastructure, Mr. Tadjadine Niam, points to the need to address the situation as a whole, and in particular to address the root causes of the conflict. “In these efforts to bring development to Darfur, it is important to recognize that the conflict has multiple causes, requiring any recovery strategy to be integrated,” he says, noting that there is also the need to address land and community reconciliation issues and reintegration, as well as governance and rule of law.

“The aim of this DJAM process is to present a diagnostic format for the current situation and key challenges to development in Darfur, while identifying specific priorities and interventions for sustaining peace and prosperity for the people of Darfur,” explains the DRA minister. Mr. Niam says that there are several challenges that are confronting the process and that might affect monetary contributions at the conference: time, high expectations and the global economic crisis.

To address these challenges directly,

On 6 February 2011, the village of Tukumare, North Darfur, was abandoned by its inhabitants due to clashes that left many houses burned and looted. Population displacement and property destruction have been prominent features of the Darfur conflict. Photo by Albert González Farran.



Mr. Niam and other DRA representatives are embarking on a tour of several countries, including Russia, China, some European nations, South Africa, Nigeria and other African countries, to mobilize support for the initiatives. “We are hopeful of the mission and we expect a lot of support for Darfur’s development,” he says.

In terms of international expectations, there has been some progress made toward the implementation of the DDPD provisions, including the initial transfer of resources by the Government to the DRA, which enabled the Authority to establish offices and engage staff. However, this progress has so far been focused on establishing institutions and associated political appointments. Because financial contributions have been lacking, the DRA has not been in a position to implement its planned programmes related to early recovery, reconstruction and development.

Furthermore, many provisions of the DDPD remained unimplemented several months after stipulated deadlines have elapsed. These provisions include the transfer of funds by the Government of Sudan to the Doha Reconstruction and Development Fund, the first tranche of which, US\$200 million, was due upon the signing of the agreement on 14 July 2011 but was deferred. These and other development snags prompted DRA Chair Dr. Seisi to tell Sudan’s National Assembly in April 2012 that a shortage of funding for the Authority and associated bodies was seriously hindering the implementation of the DDPD and the ability to bequeath to Darfuris the dividend of peace.

International actors in Darfur have been highlighting the importance of development in the region. The head of the World Food Programme (WFP) office in North Darfur, Mr. Cesar Arroyo, says that to reduce Darfuri dependence on humanitarian aid, WFP has been implementing programmes to provide the tools, skills and support necessary to increase local production in the region and also to stimulate markets and help the men and women of Darfur generate their own income.

In a recent interview with *Voices of*



On 18 April 2012, children from the Abu Shouk camp for internal displaced persons, near El Fasher, North Darfur, carried benches to new classrooms constructed by UNAMID’s Rwandan peacekeepers as part of a series of quick-impact projects in the area. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“What we need is empowerment in skills and a means to make a living so we can rebuild our communities and live a normal life.”

—Ibrahim Omer

Darfur, UNAMID’s Deputy Joint Special Representative (Operations and Management), Mr. Mohammed B. Yonis, talked about UNAMID’s contribution to early recovery. “We are working to see how we can mobilize resources to improve the lives of Darfuris and alleviate their poor living conditions,” he explained. “We are catalysts and facilitators of developmental projects.”

Mr. Yonis went on to say that the core mandate of UNAMID is the protection of civilians. “But to have peace and stability in Darfur, it is equally important to have development projects in the region,” he said. “Even though UNAMID is facilitating and working hand-in-hand with several organisations and other UN agencies on stabilization programmes, including recovery and development activities, we are also enhancing communities’ self-reliance, exploring durable solutions and fostering the enabling conditions for comprehensive

peace and development.”

Despite the setbacks and obvious challenges, there is hope that the donor conference in January 2013 will address these concerns and garner the enabling funds and other resources needed to facilitate recovery and development initiatives. The process of recovery and development in this conflict-torn region likely will be challenging even with substantial donor contributions, but the need for the peace process to restore stability and foster prosperity remains abundantly clear to Darfuris.

Like many others looking for a solution to the longstanding conflict, Mr. Ibrahim Omer, a Darfuri who lives in the Abu Shouk camp for displaced people near El Fasher, North Darfur, reduces the political debate to a simple call for assistance. “What we need is empowerment in skills and a means to make a living so we can rebuild our communities and live a normal life,” he says. ■

INTERVIEW

Chief of Civil Affairs: ‘Their Desire for Peace Will Result in Peace’

In an interview with *Voices of Darfur*, Lameck Kawiche, the Officer-in-Charge of UNAMID Civil Affairs, talked about how his section is working at state and local levels to promote peace in the region.

BY ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU



Lameck Kawiche, UNAMID's Officer-in-Charge of Civil Affairs. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Mr. Lameck Kawiche is Officer-in-Charge of UNAMID's Civil Affairs Section, a component of the Mission that works at state and local levels to facilitate the implementation of UNAMID's mandate and to support the population and Government institutions in creating and strengthening conditions and structures conducive to sustainable peace in Darfur.

Voices talked with Mr. Kawiche about recent Civil Affairs activities, and about how he and his team are working to promote a culture of peace among Darfuris through workshops and meetings with

communities across the region.

Voices of Darfur: How has Civil Affairs been working to facilitate the implementation of the Mission's mandate and address outstanding issues in Darfur?

Kawiche: Primarily, we have been engaged in facilitating the Mission's mandate through support to the peace process and in resolving local conflicts. This entails promoting a culture of peace at the level of Darfur's communities, and we are doing this by supporting activities designed to enable all stakeholders—including civil societies, wom-

en, youth groups, internally displaced persons and native administration leaders—to actively participate in the peace process and reconciliation initiatives and to be able to address the root causes of the conflict and offer sustainable solutions to resolve Darfur conflict.

As the primary mechanism for this general goal, we conduct training sessions, workshops and seminars that target different community groups to cultivate effective leadership skills for peace building. Our workshops and seminars have covered a broad range of topics, including roles to play in the peace pro-

cess, the roles of civil society organizations in democratic systems, and inclusive participation in dialogue, mediation and negotiation.

It is pertinent to note that Civil Affairs involved civil society organisations, internally displaced persons, women and youth in the Doha peace process and provided full support to the Joint Chief Mediator at the time, Mr. Djibril Bassolé, at a local level in Darfur and in Doha, Qatar. This support contributed to the success of Doha I in November 2009 and Doha II in July 2010, and eventually led to the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) in July 2011.

This process of getting people involved in the peace process made the Doha process credible. Hence, the DDPD became more accepted by Darfuris. In fact, this level of active participation in the negotiations is what made the difference between the DDPD and the former Darfur Peace Agreement. Civil Affairs is playing a vital role in the dissemination of the DDPD. We conducted more than 140 workshops with a total participation of more than 25,000 people throughout Darfur and in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital. Civil Affairs will continue to play a positive role in supporting the implementation of the DDPD.

“To a large extent, we have made progress compared to where we were in 2006 when I first came to Darfur. During those days, the Darfuri society was fragmented and there was a lack of trust among different communities and groups.”

Another aspect of Civil Affairs work entails supporting, promoting and facilitating local-level mediation, conflict resolution and reconciliation to restore peace, trust and coexistence in the local population. In doing so, Civil Affairs has mediated several conflicts involving different ethnic communities, facilitated



The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur was disseminated through workshops in Darfur's five states and in Khartoum from January to July 2012, reaching more than 25,000 Darfuris. The forums, which provided participants with the opportunity to read and discuss the agreement, were organized by the Civil Society Follow-up Mechanism, an instrument supported logistically and technically by UNAMID. The final workshop in North Darfur, held at El Fasher University on 5 July 2012, was attended by approximately 100 participants. Photo by Kirk L. Kroeker, UNAMID.

reconciliation efforts and provided support to sustain local peace agreements and promote traditional reconciliation mechanisms. In that regard, we have conducted several training sessions and workshops to build the capacity of community leaders, civil society organisations and women in traditional con-

efforts through the implementation of quick-impact projects (QIPs). In the past four years, Civil Affairs managed the QIPs programme and helped in implementing more than 600 projects across Darfur. The sectors that benefited from QIPs include health, education, water and other community-infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives. These and other ongoing projects have greatly impacted the communities by improving their social life and providing the needed facilities and services to returnees.

VOD: What is Civil Affairs currently doing to support the local population and Government of Sudan in creating and strengthening conditions and structures conducive to sustainable peace in Darfur?

Kawiche: Currently, Civil Affairs is helping build the capacity of the five Darfur State Governments and other local institutions in the area of good governance, which is the key for sustainable peace in Darfur. It is well known that

flikt resolution and reconciliation skills and techniques. These sessions have focused on understanding conflict, how to manage it and how to strengthen traditional conflict-resolution systems in the region.

Yet another area of our support to the Mission's mandate is early recovery



On 23 October 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, leaders of the Zagawa tribe attend a preparation meeting for a land dispute negotiation with the Tunjur tribe at the office of the Ajaweed Organization for Peace and Reconciliation (AOPR). The meeting, designed to establish the framework for the negotiation, was facilitated by UNAMID Civil Affairs and representatives of AOPR, a nongovernmental organisation that focuses on building peace through traditional justice mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“We now see more peace in the communities and local peace initiatives being spearheaded by community leaders and groups, including youth groups, women and civil society organisations. We have worked with these groups to carry out positive initiatives to enhance peaceful coexistence.”

governance is a factor in the Darfur conflict. We are working on good governance issues related to marginalization, transparency, accountability, good leadership and the environment. In addition, we are providing several training sessions in decentralized governance and democracy, effective and inclusive governance, good governance for peace building and the role of civil society organisations in a democratic system. Civil Affairs is making an effort to plant

the seed of democratic governance, accountability and transparency in Darfur.

VOD: How have these training sessions been going so far?

Kawiche: To a large extent, we have made progress compared to where we were in 2006 when I first came to Darfur. During those days, the Darfuri society was fragmented and there was a lack of trust among different communities and groups. Communities were not seeing eye-to-eye, and we had a high

amount of intertribal fighting compared to what we are experiencing today. We now see more local peace and reconciliation initiatives being spearheaded by community leaders and groups, including youth groups, women and civil society organisations. We have worked with these groups to carry out positive initiatives to enhance peaceful coexistence.

Also, through these training sessions and dialogues organized by Civil Affairs, we see the revitalization of traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms, opening up opportunities for the communities to either agree or disagree on issues, and also helping them to discuss problems such as access to water points either for the nomads or for the farmers.

The training sessions, workshops and dialogues we organize are helping Darfuris build on the culture of peace, tolerance and understanding, and thereby live in peace and harmony, respecting one another.

VOD: What are some of the results of your reconciliation efforts between various communities in the region, particularly in West and South Darfur between the nomads and farmers?

Kawiche: Well, here I will use the case of West Darfur where I worked for more than four years. Some of the work I did there can serve as a positive example. The efforts of Civil Affairs in West Darfur brought two communities together. We engaged the Umar Quara and Dorti communities in mediation and dialogue. The effort yielded an improved relationship between these two communities, which had disputes over land, among other concerns. We were able to help improve the security situation in those communities, resulting in a reduced number of incidents and confrontations between the tribes. We were able to help improve access to land and ensure more cultivation.

In other areas, such as South Darfur, we have done similar work, especially in helping to facilitate the establishment of peace committees or reactivating existing ones.

VOD: Beyond these reconciliation efforts, what other activities is Civil Affairs undertaking to help cultivate sustainable growth and development?

Kawiche: The real change Civil Affairs is helping to bring about in Darfur is increasing the capacity of the people here to forge common ground for peaceful coexistence. Most of our work boils down to that. Other changes we are helping to foster include practicing democratic governance and accountability, and protecting the environment through sustainable management of natural resources.

VOD: What are the major constraints and challenges confronting Civil Affairs in carrying out its duties and responsibilities to help improve the lives of Darfur's people?

Kawiche: The major constraints hindering the smooth execution of our duties and responsibilities include the restriction of our movements and also the recent insecurity in various parts of Darfur. The dynamics here make it diffi-



On 1 August 2012 in Kuma Garadayat, North Darfur, women stand in front of a new women's centre constructed by UNAMID peacekeepers from Senegal. The centre was one of several quick-impact projects facilitated by UNAMID Civil Affairs to help the community. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“The Darfuris share the same religion, the same environmental conditions and have the same needs—which are basically water, land resources and social services. If there is no hostile interference on their way of life, their desire for peace will result in peace.”

cult to rely on traditional mechanism or other classic ways of resolving conflict. The recent conflict in Kutum is a good example. The presence of some radical elements opposed to the peace process limited the ability of Civil Affairs to conduct activities there.

Other factors, including limited specialized skills within Civil Affairs, such as expertise in democratic governance, also hinder our work. Other constraints include limited accessibility to the population due to the size of the region, its difficult terrain and poor road and communications infrastructure.

VOD: On a final note, what is your prognosis for the future of Darfur in terms of establishing a culture of peace that can sustainably counter the ongoing conflict?

Kawiche: If you look at the Darfuris, they are very peaceful. The spoiler

is the conflict. I am sure that, one day, and I hope pretty soon, the holdout movements will agree on a comprehensive peace and remain committed to it. If and when that happens, I see no problem for the communities to coexist. What will be left behind here is simply an enhancement of the peaceful values the Darfuris have.

The Darfuris share the same religion, the same environmental conditions and have the same needs—which are basically water, land resources and social services. If there is no hostile interference on their way of life, their desire for peace will result in peace. The remaining holdout movements are a stumbling block to realizing peace in the region. But the culture of peace is already here, and what we are trying to do is to enhance it and make people cultivate it. ■

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Violence Displaces Those Already Displaced

In August 2012, a series of violent attacks forced the civilians living in the Kassab camp for displaced people to flee from their homes and seek safe haven in the North Darfur town of Kutum.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA AND GUIOMAR PAU SOLÉ



UNAMID, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, the Sudanese Ministry of Health and the Kutum Rural Hospital, set up an emergency clinic at a school in the area to ease the burden on Kutum Rural Hospital following attacks in and around the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The medical team working at the clinic delivered assistance to dozens of people displaced from Kassab. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Due to an outbreak of violence, Darfuris living in the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons in North Darfur were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in the nearby town of Kutum. The majority of these doubly displaced IDPs who took shelter in Kutum's open areas did not have access to basic services such as clean water, food,

sanitation facilities and health care, leading to the need for immediate humanitarian assistance.

The unrest in the area began on 1 August 2012 when the Kutum commissioner of the Alwaha district and his driver were killed by armed men. Later in the day, the official's vehicle, which was stolen during the attack, was recovered

by Sudanese security agents 2 kilometres from Kassab. On the same day, armed men attacked Kassab, looted the market, houses and other facilities, burned down the Sudanese Police station in the camp, killed four people (three civilians and one police officer) and injured six others.

One of the IDPs from Kassab, Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim, described the initial



On 27 August, a woman receives a World Food Programme food ration in the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons. WFP staff, escorted by UNAMID peacekeepers, began distribution of food rations to IDPs in Kassab at the end of August 2012. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Many of those displaced from Kassab sought help and protection at an emergency clinic set up in a school building between Kassab and Kutum. UNAMID worked with the World Health Organisation, the Sudanese Ministry of Health and the Kutum Rural Hospital to establish the clinic. On 9 August, many Kassab residents gathered at the clinic to receive medical care because the nearby hospital had already run out of medicine and was overcrowded with people seeking assistance.

Dr. Nouredin Shafi, who works at the Kutum Rural Hospital, explained that during the first week of August, he alone treated more than 200 people suffering from gunshot wounds, knife cuts and bruises. To help the hospital cope with the increased demands on its resources, UNAMID delivered 1,000 kilograms of medical supplies to the doctors.

Ms. Khadija Adam Mohammed, who

attacks. At about 10:00 a.m., he said, armed men drove nearly 50 vehicles into the camp and ordered the residents to give over their possessions. Mr. Ibrahim explained how he was sitting outside his home with his neighbour when the men drove up. “When they came to my house, they asked for my mobile phone, but I refused to give it to them and then they began to beat me,” he said. “They burned my car, which I use as a taxi.”

Kassab residents reported similar events taking place the following days in Kassab and in neighbouring villages. “On the first day of attacks, no one moved while the militias looted homes and kidnapped and killed some of the IDPs,” said Mr. Musa Ibrahim, a Kassab community leader. “People had no idea what was going on, and that is why they didn’t flee immediately.”

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicated that the entire population of Kassab, roughly 25,000 people, left the camp in the days following the attacks. Most of the people of Kassab had made their way to Kutum. Some were taken in by family or friends; others camped in Kutum’s open areas or took refuge in schools, which soon became overcrowded.

In a meeting with UNAMID officials on 12 August, Mr. Altheir Ali, the chief

community leader in Kassab, described the living conditions in Kutum as deteriorating and tragic, especially for the women, children and elderly. “The situation in Kutum is bad, and the health situation is getting worse, especially because some injured have not yet received treatment,” he said. “The little food available is shared with the host community; no one is in the camp.”

On 28 August 2012, community leader Ms. Halima Ismail inspects the health centre, ran by the nongovernmental organisation Goal, that was looted during the attack in the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons. Efforts are currently underway to rebuild the clinic. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicated that the entire population of Kassab, roughly 25,000 people, left the camp in the days following the attacks. Most of the people fled to Kutum.

fled the violence and settled in Kutum’s open area, went to the emergency clinic for chest pain. Others displaced by the Kassab incidents reported suffering from respiratory and urinary tract infections, stomach problems and malaria. Ms. Hawa Mohammed said she collapsed during the attack and a few days later still couldn’t walk. She was brought to the clinic on a cart.

“The incidents left a lot of women and children traumatized and several women and girls are reported to have been raped,” said Ms. Fatima Khalil, a teacher and a representative for Kassab women. Ms. Khalil sought refuge with her family and friends in Kutum following the clashes in the camp.

In response to the Kassab violence, UNAMID began conducting 24-hour patrols around the camp, and Nepalese Special Forces and Indonesian Police reinforced the South African troops already stationed at the Kutum Team Site. UNAMID erected temporary structures

and observation posts inside Kassab to develop a stronger physical presence. At the same time, UNAMID enhanced security in the nearby Fata Borno IDP camp. With the increased presence of peacekeepers in the area, Kassab residents began to return.

In addition to UNAMID troops working around the clock to provide enhanced security to those living in the camps and surrounding villages, the Mission, together with UN agencies and International and national nongovernmental organizations, worked to address the humanitarian situation in the area. The UN World Food Programme began distribution of food rations. UNICEF and its local partner repaired damaged water sources, collected garbage and trained IDPs on health issues.

One month after the tragic incidents in and around Kassab, more than 80 per cent of residents had returned to their Kassab homes, while a small number of people, mostly the elderly and injured, re-

mained in Kutum. Many families lost all their personal belongings, including blankets, mosquito nets, kitchen utensils and clothing. Schools were looted, and even books and water tanks were missing.

Ms. Fatima Mohammed was one among many women who decided to return from Kutum to try and rebuild, but what she found upon returning was a picture of desolation. Ms. Mohammed, who lost her husband in the attacks on 1 August, initially fled Kutum but returned to Kassab three weeks later, where she now lives with her mother and her five children. Before the attack, Ms. Mohammed made and sold bricks. Now she sits at home with no steady source of income, waiting to receive food rations.

On 2 September, while the IDPs were resettling, local community leaders signed a reconciliation agreement to foster peace and security and to investigate the recent incidents that triggered the violence. However, after the agreement was signed and when a state of normalcy began to emerge, the security situation in the area deteriorated. On 4 September, there was a rash of shootings and an attempted assault on the Kutum Locality Commissioner, who escaped unhurt. An exchange of fire left four attackers and two Sudanese Police Officers dead.

The following day, one civilian was killed and eight others were injured in the crossfire of fighting between Government forces and militia elements. UNAMID provided medical assistance and evacuated injured civilians to El Fasher for emergency treatment. In an attempt to address and mitigate this renewed violence, the Locality Commissioner was replaced, a curfew was imposed and martial law was declared.

Many Kassab residents have expressed appreciation to UNAMID peacekeepers for helping to improve the security in the area. Currently, the humanitarian and security situation is relatively stable in Kassab and other nearby camps, and residents in the area are attempting to rebuild their lives as best they can. UNAMID is continuing its patrols and is working with humanitarian agencies and local authorities to escort women for firewood collection. ■

On 27 August 2012, UNAMID peacekeepers from Nepal guard the World Food Programme’s distribution point in the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons. Nepalese Special Forces and Indonesian Police reinforced the South African troops already stationed in Kutum Team Site to ensure a 24-hour presence in the camp. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.





On 18 October 2012, in Shagra, North Darfur, women demonstrate how to make fuel-efficient stoves. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Fuel-Efficient Stoves Protect Women, Environment

A new kind of locally made stove is making an impact on the risks associated with firewood collection and helping to preserve the environment in the process.

BY EMADELDIN RIJAL

“The new fuel-efficient stoves are useful and will never be substituted for traditional environmentally unfriendly ovens,” says Ms. Hawa Musa, a 40 year old woman from Narmala village, located 70 kilometres north of El Geneina in West Darfur.

Ms. Musa is among the many women in her village who have stopped cooking over open fires and are now relying exclusively on a new style of stove that is easily constructed using locally available materials.

“I will no longer need to cook over

an open fire,” she says, noting that she now has several fuel-efficient stoves, each sized according to the different pots she uses to cook. As a result of the rising popularity of these stoves, cooking over open fires is discouraged in Ms. Musa’s community, and in other

communities around Darfur. Open-fire methods consume significantly more firewood.

As in many other rural Darfur areas, residents of Narmala village were accustomed to having their meals cooked over the open fires of three-stone ovens, which are constructed as their name suggests: a pot is placed over three adjacent stones, with the fire burning below. Because this old stove design does not shield the fire from breezes, the flames burn brightly, quickly consuming firewood and sending up sparks that can set fire to homes made of wood, bamboo and straw.

In addition, because the firewood is consumed quickly in the old stoves, those cooking with them must collect that wood regularly, making long trips to forested areas and putting themselves at risk in the process. In Darfur, the task of firewood collection falls to the women.

Beyond the risks to property and people, open-fire stoves have broader environmental implications. The heavy reliance on firewood as a source of cooking has jeopardized Darfur's fragile environment, leading to deforestation and erosion.

"I used to go out at least four times a month to forage for firewood," says Ms. Fatima Ibrahim, a 37-year-old West Darfur woman. Fatima explains that she was accustomed to walking long hours across the semi-arid land to get a bundle of firewood sufficient to cook for seven days. During these walks, she says, she had to come to terms with the potential security risks that she and other women face while away from the village.

Reports of violent assault against women collecting firewood have prompted UNAMID to take action across Darfur by implementing patrols to watch over the women as they work. In addition to implementing these patrols, UNAMID has been promoting fuel-efficient stoves to help reduce the need for the women to travel outside the village so frequently.

Because fuel-efficient stoves can be made fairly easily from local materials, and because they consume less wood than their old-style counterparts, their

Beyond the risks to property and people, open-fire stoves have broader environmental implications in Darfur. The heavy reliance on firewood as a source of cooking has jeopardized Darfur's fragile environment, leading to deforestation and erosion.

popularity is increasing. According to the Sudanese National Forests Corporation, the amount of firewood saved by using fuel-efficient stoves in comparison to traditional open-fire stoves is more than 50 per cent.

"Now I don't need to go out more than one time or twice per month to bring firewood," says Ms. Ibrahim, who is among more than 300 women who have attended UNAMID's workshops in West Darfur to learn how to make the stoves.

While the new stoves might be simple to construct, the potential impact of their design is far from trivial. Cooking fires emit greenhouse gases laced with sunlight-absorbing black carbon, which scientists say is the second greatest contributor to climate change. Scientists

also say that exposure to cooking smoke leads to lower birth weights, childhood pneumonia and several other chronic illnesses.

In Darfur, UNAMID is not the only organisation pushing for broad-scale use of these new stove designs to help avert the environmental and personal risks associated with open-fire cooking. A few kilometres south of El Fasher, in Shagra village, there is a small green oasis in the middle of the desert. It is a centre established by a UN World Food Programme (WFP) project.

Darfuris working at the centre, which is run by a local nongovernmental organisation, grow seedlings, plant trees and manufacture fuel-efficient stoves and briquettes. The head of the WFP office in North Darfur, Mr.

Ms. Nadia Ibrahim Mohamed, who works at a training centre in Shagra, North Darfur, shows the briquettes, made from animal dung and straw, that are designed to replace wood for cooking. The centre was established by the World Food Programme and is now run by a local nongovernmental organisation. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.





Fuel-efficient stoves, locally manufactured in Darfur, are quickly becoming more popular than the traditional method of open-fire cooking. In the SAFE Centre in Shagra village, North Darfur, women learn how to make the stoves as part of a WFP's programme called Safe Access to Cooking Fuel and Alternative Energy. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“Maybe the new fuel-efficient stoves are just not as smoky as the open fires, and therefore our food doesn’t get a smoke smell but a delicious one.”

—Aisha Ibrahim

Cesar Arroyo, explains that the centre opened in 2010 in response to the need to protect women. “There is a risk of rape incidents when women walk between 10 and 15 kilometres to collect firewood,” he says. “If we reduce firewood consumption, women can be more protected.”

Another aspect of the project is designed to increase the income of Darfuri households to reduce the dependence on humanitarian assistance. “The fuel-efficient stoves are not new in Darfur,” explains Mr. Arroyo. “You

can buy them at the market, but the difference is that here we explain how to make them.”

WFP has set up training centres for women in several villages and camps for internally displaced persons across North Darfur. At the training centres, Darfuris can learn techniques to make fuel-efficient stoves and non-wood briquettes. While the fuel-efficient stoves can be used with wood, the briquettes made from animal dung and straw serve as an alternative to wood, completely eliminating the need to collect

firewood or purchase it at local markets. So far, says Mr. Arroyo, more than 200,000 women have attended the training workshops.

WFP data indicates that a single household can save an average of 3.99 Sudanese pounds (US\$0.68) per day on firewood by using the new stoves. In addition, entrepreneurs can earn an income of 130 Sudanese pounds (US\$22.41) each month by making and selling the stoves and briquettes.

Of course, the stoves wouldn’t become popular if they could not be used to produce tasty food. Those who are using the new fuel-efficient stoves say the food cooked on them tastes better than when it is made over open fires. “Maybe the new fuel-efficient stoves are just not as smoky as the open fires, and therefore our food doesn’t get a smoke smell but a delicious one,” says Ms. Aisha Ibrahim, a woman from West Darfur, smiling. ■



Economic Downturn Dampens Darfur Trade, Pushes Prices Higher

While small signs of economic recovery may be emerging across Darfur, those living in camps or in the villages and cities across the region have been struggling against rising prices and a higher cost of living.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

The recent economic downturn in Sudan, which has taken its toll on businesses in Darfur, has resulted in rising prices that have broadly affected traders and consumers in the region. The formation of South Sudan

more than one year ago and the ensuing disputes over oil rights have deeply affected the economies on both sides of the border, leading to inflation, austerity measures and protests. Exacerbating the downturn's impact in Darfur are

several other factors, including the general security situation, less than bountiful harvests and the longstanding dispute between nomads and pastoralists.

Food security has been a critical issue in North Darfur and in the northern



Left: Mr. Safwat Lamie, pictured sitting in his El Fasher shop in North Darfur, arrived in Sudan with his family in 1955. Mr. Lamie cites the price of flour and rice, in particular, as having increased substantially in recent months. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

On 28 September 2012, a woman (**far left**) and men (**left**) sell goods in the North Darfur village of Mado, which is located between the villages of Malha and Mellit. Mado serves as a commerce point for the area, attracting traders and their customers from neighbouring villages and even from Libya. The market is open every Friday. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

parts of South Darfur, where the harvests have resulted in poor yields. A recent report from USAID indicates that Darfur's 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently face high levels of food insecurity, while about 1.2 million people in the drought-affected areas of North Darfur face crisis levels of food insecurity.

Rising costs, which have cut across all businesses in Darfur, have affected higher institutions in the region too. Recently, university students staged demonstrations in Darfur to express their concern over tuition fees and an increase in their cost of living. While the downturn is affecting businesses

and institutions alike, the effect on the economy of Darfur is perhaps most palpable by visiting local markets.

In El Fasher's main market, located at the centre of town in the North Darfur state capital, there is a chronic food shortage. El Fasher's market may be considered emblematic of the entire Darfur region because of its direct links to the markets in El Geneina, West Darfur, and Nyala, South Darfur, and to the borders with Chad, South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Shop owners in the El Fasher market talked with *Voices of Darfur*, citing some of the effects of high prices in the region. Mr. Mujahed Suleiman, a grocery

store manager, attributes the rising prices to transportation costs and security issues. "During the rainy seasons, many roads were in bad shape, causing much delay in the delivery of goods," he says. "In addition, the conflict in parts of North Darfur, particularly in the Kutum area, also contributed to the rising costs of goods, such as tomatoes."

One El Fasher store owner, Mr. Adam Musa, explains that two litres of cooking oil now cost 35 Sudanese pounds (about US\$6), while five months ago the same quantity could be purchased for 25 Sudanese pounds (about US\$4.3). Mr. Safwat Lamie, the owner of an El Fasher wholesale mar-

Rising costs, which have cut across all businesses in Darfur, have affected higher institutions in the region too. Recently, university students staged demonstrations in Darfur to express their concern over tuition fees and an increase in their cost of living.

ket, cites the price of flour and rice, in particular, as having increased substantially in recent months. And he says consumers are spending as much as before, but are keeping to essential items only.

“These high prices are affecting the business in the market, and because consumers are adjusting to the way they purchase goods—not buying much nowadays—they tend to buy in small quantities,” he says.

While some prices might be high in this economic downturn, the prices of some vegetables and fruits, such as onions, tomatoes, oranges and bananas, have decreased recently in El Fasher because of the local harvests. Ms. Rugia Musa, a woman who sells vegetables, says prices on these items have come down slightly because of the harvest season but still remain high. “A box of tomatoes now costs around 250 Sudanese pounds [US\$43] and the price of a few tomatoes on the market ranges from 3 to 5 Sudanese pounds [US\$0.5 to US\$0.86],” she says.

An update put out earlier this year by the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) indicates that North Darfur sorghum prices have risen 56 per cent in 2012 over 2011. Sorghum is the main staple for the majority of poor households in the central and eastern regions of Darfur. Ms. Musa indicated WFP’s assessment is accurate, noting that food prices have been steadily increasing across the board despite the occasional small reduction because of acceptable local harvests.

Despite some reduction in the price of certain specific household staples, the prices of meat products and chicken have steadily risen this year. Mr. Sadig Yagoub, who sells meat in the El Fasher market, one of the largest such markets in the region, says chicken is now selling at roughly 90 to 100 per cent higher than it was selling a short time ago.

Mr. Mohammed Mustapha, an El Fasher meat trader, says the price of livestock across the board has increased. “A sheep costs 1,000 Sudanese pounds [US\$172] today, while it cost only 400 Sudanese pounds [US\$70] last year,” he says. “The major changes we are seeing concern the purchasing power of money, which has led to an increase in prices.”

In September, the Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan signed an agreement in Addis Ababa to address the outstanding issues in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to strengthen bilateral relations. Under this agreement, both countries pledged to work together to rebuild their econo-

mies and attract foreign investment to stimulate economic growth.

With the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan on issues relating to the economy, trade and oil production, observers expect commodity prices to stabilise. Whether that stabilisation eventually leads to a stronger Sudanese pound remains to be seen.

According to recent information released by the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the prices of millet in El Fasher and Nyala have begun to decline. A report from the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation indicates that the recent reduction in some cereal and grain prices is likely due to the release of stocks by traders in anticipation of harvests, and improved humanitarian aid distribution in some conflict-affected areas.

In the meantime, Darfuris will continue to look to such shifts as possible signs of economic recovery. Mr. Bashir Morsal, a merchant who sells shoes in El Fasher, said he had to close his store earlier this year because no one was buying. But with guarded optimism for a potential return to a strong economy, he recently reopened his shop in the hope that he will again be able to make a profit. Indeed, Mr. Morsal says he is confident that prices of some goods will begin to come down. ■

On 15 November 2012, a woman sells grain at the market in the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons (IDP) on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.



World AIDS Day: What Is Your Action Plan?

Since 2009, World AIDS Day has been the highlight of UNAMID's HIV&AIDS Section activities, which are designed to raise awareness and promote HIV interventions among peacekeepers and the host population, including internally displaced persons.

BY MARGARET MASENDA-SIMBI

World AIDS Day, a global event that takes place on 1 December each year, commemorates those who have died from AIDS and brings hope not only to those who are living with HIV, but also to those affected by the impact of the epidemic. Most importantly, the day creates synergy and enkindles a positive spirit that can help continue the fight against HIV and AIDS.

We know how HIV is transmitted and prevented, and many of us can take some comfort in an HIV-negative status. But nobody is immune to the disease itself or its social implications. As World AIDS Day 2012 draws near, please take a moment and ask yourself about

your HIV status, how the disease has affected you and whether you and the people around you are making the right decisions to make a difference. What have you done to make the difference that you so much desire when it comes to HIV and AIDS?

Since 2009, World AIDS Day has been the highlight of UNAMID's HIV&AIDS Section activities, which are designed to raise awareness and promote HIV interventions among peacekeepers and the host population, including internally displaced persons. The current theme of this year's event is "Getting to Zero." That's *zero* new infections, *zero* deaths and *zero* discrimination.

Darfur, although a remote area, has

not been spared from the HIV epidemic. HIV incidents have been reported in Darfur, which means that UNAMID and its partners have an important opportunity to make an impact through preventive interventions that can help curb new transmissions. World AIDS Day is marked in all Darfur states—in all UNAMID sectors—through out-

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reach campaigns conducted in partnership with the Sudan National AIDS Program, UNAMID's local counterpart in HIV and AIDS interventions.

The success of previous World AIDS Day events in UNAMID has generated further support from UNAMID's senior management as well as from other Mission sections. The best examples are the joint exercises with Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) staff to provide HIV sensitisation sessions for ex-combatants, and the joint prison visits with Rule of Law staff to conduct awareness-raising sessions among prison inmates and officers. Other examples include UNAMID's quick-impact projects, which have enabled the construc-

tion of counselling and testing centres, and awareness-raising sessions during DDR site visits to monitor community-based, labour-intensive projects.

It is worth mentioning that prominent Sudanese officials are paying more attention to HIV and AIDS issues. For instance, UNAIDS Sudan recently reported that Her Excellency Widad Babiker, wife of the President of Sudan, is now the patron of the national campaign to eliminate new HIV infections among children and to keep their mothers alive. Recently, Madam Babiker visited the Sudanese Association of People Living with HIV, and said the following to the men and women living with HIV: "I am in

your place to hear your issues and to be closer to you." This is a positive indication of political will, for Sudan and for Darfur.

I wish to appeal to you personally to get involved in the struggle against HIV and AIDS. It does not matter what the magnitude of your actions are, but rather that you have made a contribution, perhaps as the selfless act of ensuring that you continue to protect yourself and your family—or, better still, if you are HIV-positive, living positively. You are important and loved by the world. See you at the World AIDS Day event in Darfur. ■

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On 17 October 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Theatre Director Samiha Abdul Muni'em (centre) poses with members of the drama group "Ashwaq Al Salam," which translates as "longing for peace." Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Peace Performance: An Interview with Theatre Director Samiha Abdul Muni'em

Theatre director Samiha Abdul Muni'em talks with *Voices of Darfur* about her past productions and her current work, and shares her thoughts on the impact of theatre drama on the peace process.

BY ALA MAYYAH

Ms. Samiha Abdul Muni'em, born in El Fasher in 1990, comes from a family that appreciates art. Her father is an architect and her uncle, Mr. Abdul Qader Abu Baker, is a well-known local artist.

Ms. Muni'em studied Theatre Arts in Khartoum at the University of Sudan, where she graduated in 2011. By the time she left the university system, she had already achieved a respectable portfolio of productions. Today, she is continuing her pursuit of becoming a renowned Darfuri theatre director.

Ms. Muni'em sat down with *Voices of Darfur* and talked about her hope for the future of Darfur and how she shapes her plays against a backdrop of critical social issues. In the interview, Ms. Muni'em shared her thoughts about her previous productions and her current work, and discussed the impact of theatre drama on the peace process.

Voices of Darfur: Tell us about the plays you have directed and produced so far. What were they about and where did you present them?

Muni'em: I have produced three

plays after graduating from the University of Sudan. The first one was titled "Between Civilization and Barbarism." In it, I addressed some issues in Darfur, such as tribal conflict, street children, education and violence against women. It was presented in El Fasher for the first in the cultural centre, then in the Adhma Avenue on the occasion of National Independence Day. I also presented it in Al Salam camp for displaced people in North Darfur, where large audience attended. Actually, the number of attendees in the camp was more than I expected.

The second play was titled “Retouch” or “Last Touch.” In this one, I addressed general humanitarian issues, such as starvation in Somalia, poverty in camps and respect for diversity. It was presented in the cultural centre in El Fasher and had good attendance.

The third one, called “Something,” mainly addressed coexistence among Darfuris in the conflict aftermath. It was played at the inauguration ceremony of El Fasher Library, last July, and it was great pleasure for me that it was seen by UNAMID staff. This play will be part of my new play, which is under preparations currently.

VOD: And what is your new play about?

Muni'em: Actually, I would like to keep that as a surprise to the audience. At the moment, I can only say that the title is “A-Sh-A-L,” which are only letters, no words. The play consists of 12 parts in 45 minutes. Eight parts are almost ready in terms of concept and choreography.

VOD: Did you use one cast of actors or different actors in each play?

Muni'em: I have dealt so far with one group, called “Ashwaq Al Salam.” It’s a group of young artists and they work with me voluntarily.

VOD: Knowing that all your plays are silent, what is behind that choice, especially considering that words and dialogue can be powerful tools in performing arts?

Muni'em: It is a choice I made after some thinking about how language is an issue in Darfur. As you know, there is more than one language used locally. Some people speak their own language only, and they wouldn’t understand my plays due to the language differences. This is something I want to avoid because I want my plays to reach all Darfuris from different areas. Also, silent plays can be presented to foreign audiences from other nationalities, like the audience from UNAMID. I could tell they understood my play and really liked it, considering the loud applause they gave after the show. So a silent play can be an international expression, just

“People are not used to seeing females work in the performing arts. Some people tell me they find it strange that I’m doing these plays.”

like music.

VOD: So what other ways, instead of language, do you rely on to deliver a story in your plays?

Muni'em: Two things, basically: Sound effects, including music, and the body movements of actors, including dancing, as well as facial expressions.

VOD: And what about script writing? Since all kind of plays, even silent ones, need to be written to include the details in sequential scenes, have you relied on a particular writer?

Muni'em: Not yet. I’ve written my own plays, but I would definitely like to deal with a good writer once the opportunity arises. For now, I can’t afford it financially.

VOD: Speaking of finance, do you sell tickets for your plays to cover the costs?

Muni'em: No, I present them for free because most Darfuris are going through financial difficulties, and they wouldn’t be able to afford the tickets. I want people to attend my shows easily so they can draw large audiences. But I was paid previously on two occasions. The first fund was 1,000 Sudanese pounds given by the committee of Adhma Avenue for presenting my first play there. The money was collected from the residents of that area, and I distributed it fully among the cast of 13 members. At another time, I received 500 Sudanese pounds as support from the Ministry of Planning and Public Utilities, and that was for my second play. For the third play, my father covered the cost on his own, since I still have no income.

VOD: Did your family support or oppose your study and work in this line?

Muni'em: Fortunately, my family supports me, especially my father. It would have been much tougher on me without their support, as it gives me

confidence and strength. My father was concerned in the beginning that I might face some social rejection for working in theatre, but he fully encouraged me and still supports me financially and morally to build up my career.

VOD: As a female, do you face challenges of some kind while working in theatre in Darfur?

Muni'em: Only to some extent. People are not used to seeing females work in the performing arts. Some people tell me they find it strange that I’m doing these plays. Still, I can’t consider that real social pressure. I mean, I was able to present all my shows successfully. I’m optimistic that, over time, our society will have more acceptance of women in theatre, especially that there are now some local TV series with many actresses, and the people are accepting that because these shows are presented with a high degree of consideration of the local culture and the common morals.

On the other hand, I face other kind of challenges while preparing for a play. For example, I don’t have all the required tools within my reach, such as a place properly equipped for theatre rehearsals. We need a stage with wireless microphones, lighting units, partitions, sometimes mirrors and curtains. But I don’t let all that stop me. If I want to make a play, I have to do it with whatever is available. On some days, we stopped rehearsing due to power outages, but the next day we continued, and that’s the important thing. Determination and enthusiasm make challenges look smaller and easier, I guess.

VOD: In your opinion, is the major challenge to improving theatre in Darfur finding sufficient funds, or is it social acceptance or other factors? And which factor is most important for a good play, funds or freedom of expression?



On 18 July 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, members of the theatre group "Ashwaq Al Salam" present a piece of theatre drama during the opening ceremony of the new Cultural Centre and Library in El Fasher. UNAMID sponsored the rehabilitation of the library. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

"I would like to ask Darfuris to unite at this important stage, to repel violent acts, to care for each other, to live in peace together and to deliver peace to the next generation."

Muni'em: Both are as much important. Without freedom of expression a play would still be incomplete and without money you can't produce any play, even if you have all the freedom. For improving theatre in Darfur, we need all that. We need funds and social acceptance and a safe environment too. We might get there gradually. We addressed the Ministry of Culture about our material needs, but the Ministry lacks funds currently. I'd like to mention that, despite this situation, we often get moral support from the Secretary General of the Ministry, Mr. Ibrahim Sa'ad. He follows up on our plays, on me and the acting cast in the "Ashwaq Al Salam" group, and always encourages us to continue doing plays. He is like the godfather of this group. I extend all my respect and gratitude to him.

VOD: And where do you usually do the rehearsals?

Muni'em: So far in the El Fasher Cultural Centre. They give us a hall for this purpose and we appreciate it, although the place lacks the required equipment. Unfortunately, the place was ruined

due to the heavy rains recently. The new play will be rehearsed and presented in the Youth Union, which is a place where El Fasher youth gather to share their art, thoughts and opinions.

VOD: Is there an easy way for Darfuri theatre artists to get information about productions outside Sudan?

Muni'em: For me, I attend festivals in Khartoum, like the "Khartoum Theater Days" in which several groups from different countries participate to present their plays. They come from Arab countries, Europe and Africa. I learn a lot through watching these foreign shows. I also attend training workshops in Khartoum, organized by the University of Sudan and other institutions that bring in foreign artists. At the last workshop I attended in July, we presented a play in the German Cultural Centre and we applied new directing and acting methods and techniques that were taught in the workshop.

VOD: Theatre is one of the oldest arts. In Darfur, what is the background on theatrical expression and

how was theatre first introduced to the region?

Muni'em: Well, in Sudan, the plays were affected by performing arts in some other Arab countries, such as Egypt and Syria. That was in the middle of the twentieth century. At that time, there was an institution, called "Bakht Al Ridha," that presented some plays that addressed women's rights and the importance of education. As for Darfur, people here are into singing more than plays. They express their concerns, thoughts and issues through songs. Theatre groups are not very numerous in Darfur. But they are working hard to continue on, and present their plays on their issues and situations inside and outside the camps. There are many traditional groups that perform through dancing and singing. They use their own language, depending on their tribal origin.

VOD: In your opinion, how can theatre contribute effectively to the social development in Darfur?

Muni'em: Theatre can do a lot in this regard. I have always believed that drama artists and journalists can make the biggest impact on society through their messages because they deal with people and events and history, and they go into the little details behind the scenes and all that. Theatre in Darfur can raise awareness on social issues, such as the importance of rejecting acts such as forced marriage and violence against women. It can also address current issues such as child soldiers and the importance of coexistence and peace.

VOD: Many believe that peace is going to be achieved through the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Do you think so?

Muni'em: Yes, I think the Doha Document is good and can bring peace to Darfuris, provided that it will be implemented properly and fairly in all its provisions and among all Darfuris.

VOD: In the end, what message would you like to deliver through Voices of Darfur?

Muni'em: I would like to ask Darfuris to unite at this important stage, to repel violent acts, to care for each other, to live in peace together, and to deliver peace to the next generation. ■

Theatre Director Samiha Abdul Muni'em. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.





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