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of Darfur

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Leather artistry a tool for peace:
An interview with Darfurian leather
artist Aidarous



AFRICAN UNION - UNITED NATIONS
HYBRID OPERATION IN DARFUR (UNAMID)

**UNAMID Outreach Activities
Making Difference in Golo,
Central Darfur**

**JSR Mamabolo Speaks
to the Press**

**UNAMID supports fight
against gender-based
violence in Darfur**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I am pleased to introduce this last edition of the Voices of Darfur magazine for 2019. This edition 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 a press conference held in Khartoum, Sudan, UNAMID Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator (JSR/JCM), Mr. Jeremiah Mamabolo, talks to journalists about the Resolution 2495 (2019) recently adopted by the UN Security Council which extends UNAMID's mandate until 31 October 2020. Mr. Mamabolo also addresses a variety of issues pertaining to UNAMID's diverse activities, the Mission's transition and the Darfur peace process.

The feature article entitled: 'UNAMID supports fight against gender-based violence in Darfur' focusses on UNAMID's efforts to fight gender-based violence in the reports it receives on the matter daily in its Area of Operations. The observance of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign is one tool utilized by the Mission to publicize the dangers of various forms of violence perpetrated against women in Darfur.

In another feature entitled: 'UNAMID Outreach: Making a Difference in Golo, central Darfur', we highlight the Mission's Communications and Public Information Section (CPIS) efforts to ensure that people in Golo have access to necessary information about the Mis-

sion's mandate and the peace process.

The collation of photographs in the magazine focuses on high profile delegation visits to Sudan and Darfur. These visits include prominent personalities like the UN Deputy Secretary General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Smail Chergui and African Ambassadors accredited to Sudan who visited to El Fasher, North Darfur in early December. During these visits the delegations engaged the country's newly appointed transitional government, local authorities, UNAMID Senior Management and Staff, inspected the Human Rights Resource Center and interacted with members of the local community including women's union, civil society and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Finally, in our cover feature, 'Leather artistry for peace', Voices of Darfur presents an interview with the well-known Darfuri leather artist, Aidarous, who speaks about his experience in shaping and sculpting on leather and the urgent need to develop local youth skills in leather artistry in Darfur and the new Sudan.

As Voices of Darfur continues to evolve as a news magazine in 2020 and beyond, feel free to send us your feedback. Send your comments by email with "Letters to the Editor / Voices of Darfur" in the subject line to

unamid-publicinformation@un.org

Musi Khumalo

Chief Communications and Public
Information Section (CPIS)

ON THE COVER



Leather artist, Mohammed Yousif Abdulrahman Aidarous, shaping and sculpting on leather at his house in El Fasher, North Darfur.

Photo by Amin Ismail, UNAMID.



UN Deputy Secretary General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, arrives in El Fasher, North Darfur, where she discussed collaboration between the UN and the Government of Sudan. Photo by Amin Ismail, UNAMID.

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Commissioner

UNAMID hands over its Sector Headquarters in South Darfur to Government of Sudan



UNAMID officially hands over its Sector Headquarters in Nyala, South Darfur, to the Government of Sudan. The handover documents were signed by UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR), Jeremiah Mamabolo and Ambassador Omer Al Farouq Al Sanosi, Representative of Sudan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The state government pledged to use the camp for civilian purposes as a Police Training Academy and a campus for University of Nyala. Photo by Amin Ismail, UNAMID.

Nyala, 19 November 2019; the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) handed over its Sector Headquarters in Nyala, South Darfur, to the Government of Sudan. The handover documents were signed by UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR), Jeremiah Mamabolo and Ambassador Omer Al Farouq Al Sanosi, Representative of Sudan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In line with UNAMID's insistence that the facilities be used for civilian purposes, the state government pledged to use the Mission's former camp as Police Training Academy and premises for University of Nyala. The event was attended by the Acting Wali (Governor) of South Darfur, community leaders, representatives of University of Nyala, Sudan Police Force and UNAMID senior management and staff.

The ceremony also included lowering of UN and AU flags and raising of the Sudanese flag, cultural performances and traditional dances.

Speaking at the occasion, the JSR

emphasized that the handover of the Sector Headquarters, UNAMID airport terminal, various buildings, vehicles and other administrative tools should support the implementation of good governance, rule of law and the extension of state institutions in the region.

"UNAMID will be handing over an estimated \$99.4 million of assets including 204 vehicles, 175 generators, over 580 rooms, and four office blocks for civilian end use by the Government and people of South Darfur. In addition, three generators, two fire trucks, six buses and one general purpose heavy vehicle are being gifted to Nyala Airport Authorities," said Mr. Mamabolo.

He explained that the hand over was an opportunity to improve the lives of the Darfuri people, where the camp can possibly serve as a centre of learning and training as well as to provide basic services.

On his part, Ambassador Omer Al Farouq Al Sanosi stated that the handover comes in line with Security Resolutions and the commitments of Government of Sudan and the African

Union and pledged that the facilities would be used for development and supporting stabilization projects in South Darfur. He commended UNAMID for its efforts throughout the last 10 years in peacekeeping in collaboration with Government of South Darfur. "We hope that before the end of UNAMID new mandate, we will celebrate the lasting and comprehensive peace in Darfur," added Ambassador Omer Al Farouq

In his remarks, Acting Wali Maj. Gen. Hashim Khalid announced that the handed over former UNAMID Super camp would be used for civilian purposes by South Darfur community for building peace and stability and expressed his appreciation for the Mission's continued support to the people of South Darfur.

The Chief of Native Administration in Nyala Town, Salaheldeen Mohamed Afadol Rijal, urged the Government of Sudan to use the facilities for the benefit of the local population in South Darfur, especially for education and health institutions.

UN State Liaison Functions call for immediate review of land tenure policies



On 6 November, UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs) in North Darfur, in collaboration with the Darfur Land Commission (DLC), convened the Darfur Land Conference in El Fasher, North Darfur under the theme: “Secure Land Tenure to Consolidate Peace Building.” The Conference, attended by Government Officials, UNAMID, UN HABITAT, UNDP, FAO, Native Administration, civil society and academia, was aimed at enlightening the participants about land tenure, land utilization and related procedures. Presentations at the Conference included Darfur Land Commission methodology, enhancing capability of land administration to build peace, livelihoods and related challenges of voluntary returns and land registration.

In his opening remarks, the Wali (Governor) of north Darfur state, Brigadier General, Malik El Taib Khojali, emphasized that organizing and resolving land tenure issues is a key priority for his government in achieving durable peace and stability in the state. “The theme and orientation of this conference are aligned with the vision of north Darfur government in

its efforts to consolidate social peace during the transitional period the country is currently undergoing. Our government is exerting maximum efforts to address challenges related to land disputes and recurrent friction that occurs between herders and farmers. In this regard, our state government recently issued a decree informing on the formation of a joint Herders and Farmers Commission tasked with protecting these herders and farmers and their produce during the agricultural season by addressing issues of concern related to farms and migratory areas,” Brigadier General Khojali added. He further urged the participants to propose to his government concrete and feasible resolutions on land tenure and pledged to implement the recommendations of the conference for the sake of stability and a bright future for the people of north Darfur.

Addressing the conference, Mr. Mohamed Salih Mango, Darfur Land Commissioner in North Darfur State, acknowledged the support of UNAMID, UN HABITAT and UNDP in sponsoring the conference, which he said was an outcome of a recent

conference held in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum which also followed a series of consultations among the people of Darfur on land tenure and usage. Mr. Mago noted that “transiting Darfur from peacekeeping to peace building and peace reinforcement phases will only be possible if land issues are addressed in a concrete manner.” He also commended efforts made by UNAMID, UN HABITAT, UNDP and FAO, through sponsoring related community projects which are effectively reinforcing pillars of peace and stability in Darfur, stating that these UN organizations are playing a critical role in the creation of a conducive environment to voluntary return of IDPs and refugees.

Speaking on behalf of UN HABITAT and UN SLFs in north Darfur, Mr. Mutaz Mustafa Nugud, highlighted the joint efforts of UNAMID and UN Agencies in supporting community related projects, including capacity building programs and income-generation training workshops as part of the current UN strategy driven by UNAMID to consolidate peace and stability in Darfur.

Mr. Nugud, called on relevant local

authorities to review the current traditional land registration structure, which he considered too complex and strongly consider replacing it with the new model which is more flexible, expressing the readiness of UN HABITAT to support the local Ministry of Urban Planning in implementing the new model of land registration, which has been success-

fully implemented in several countries, including Kenya and Zambia.

The Darfur Land Conference was described by El Shartay (Community Leader), Ahmed Sabil, who is also the Head of Shimayat Native administration, as key to transiting Darfur from the stage of war and communal disputes to real phase of peace and stability, while Ms.

Noura Omar Mohamed, a participant from El Salam IDPs Camp in El Fasher, requested the reduction of land registration fees, noting that the Conference is a golden opportunity for the people of Darfur to address once and for all the contentious issue of land tenure as a way forward in consolidating social peace and stability in Darfur. ■

UNAMID Observes World AIDS Day



On 1 December 2019, UNAMID celebrated World AIDS Day at the Mission headquarters in Zalingei, Central Darfur, under the theme “Communities make the difference”. The event, attended by UNAMID Force commander, Lieutenant General Leonard Ngondi and Acting Police Commissioner, Dr. Sultan Temuri as well as Mission staff, included drama and cultural performances.

UNAMID peacekeepers (civilian, military and police), participated in a march and observed a minute of silence in remembrance of those who have lost their lives to this disease. Additionally, all attendees lit a candle in a symbolic gesture of solidarity to pay tribute to the people living with

HIV and AIDS as well as their caregivers and supporters.

UNAMID Force commander, Lieutenant General Leonard Ngondi, read UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ message of the Day, in which he stated that ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030, as committed in the Sustainable Development Goals, will require a continuous collaborative effort.

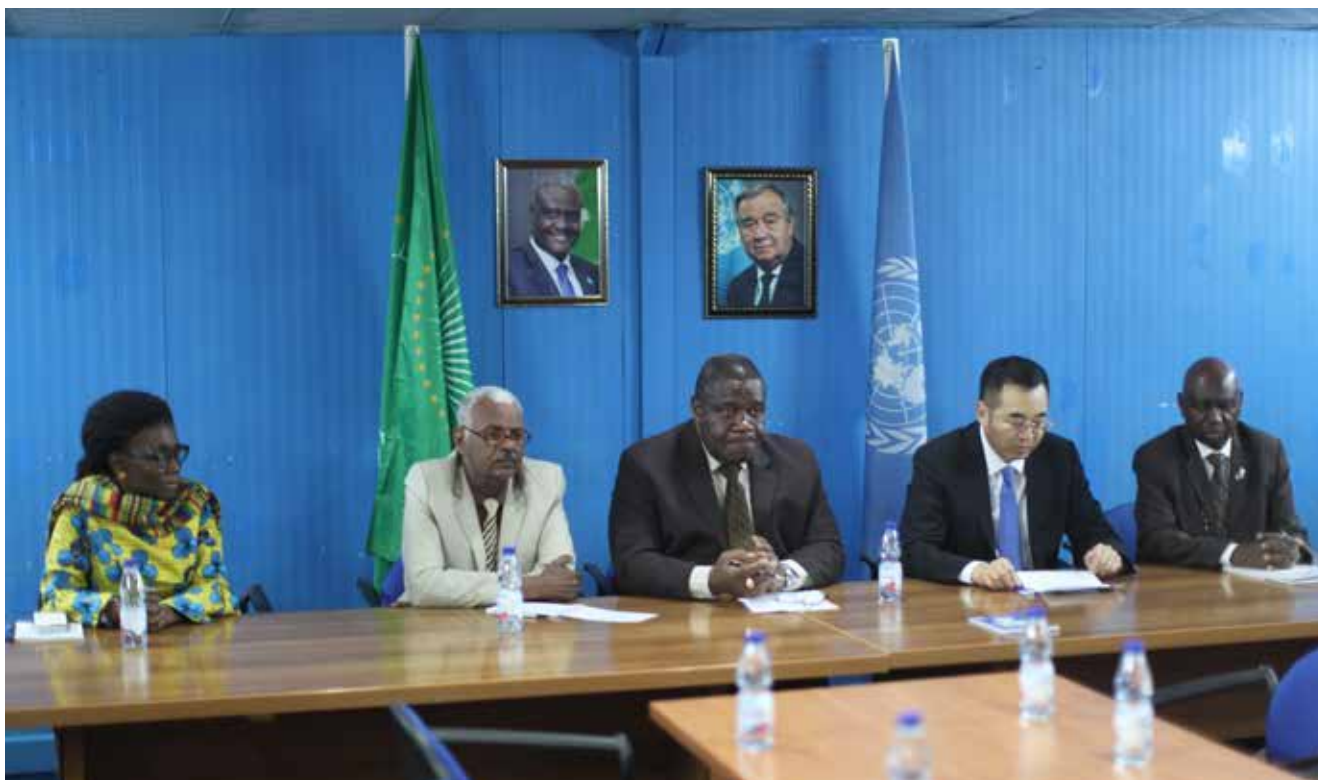
“A record 38 million people are living with HIV, and resources for the response to the epidemic declined by \$1 billion last year. More than ever we need to harness the role of community-led organizations that advocate for their peers, deliver HIV services, defend human rights and provide support,” said Guterres.

In his remarks, Mr. Joseph Gernal, Head of the Mission’s HIV/AIDS Unit, emphasized that communities are the lifeblood of an effective AIDS response and an important pillar of support to government programs as well as to international cooperation.

“As members of the peacekeeping community, it is part and parcel of our mandate to curb the transmission of HIV and promote as well as advocate for the end of AIDS by 2030”, said Mr. Gernal.

World AIDS Day is celebrated around the world on December 1st each year to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on, and celebrate victories, such as increased access to treatment and prevention services. ■

UNAMID and FAO sign MoU to combat inter-communal violence in Darfur



UNAMID Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator (JSR/JCM), Jeremiah Mamabolo (center) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Country Representative in Sudan, Mr. Babagana Ahmadu, (extreme right) signed on 28 August 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the implementation of a project focused on the strengthening of local capacities to effectively address inter-communal violence and to find sustainable solutions to its root causes in Darfur, Sudan. The project funding comes from the UN-China Peace and Security Sub-Fund of the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF). Photo by Mohammed Elhadi, UNAMID.

On 28 August 2019, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR), Jeremiah Mamabolo and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Country Representative in Sudan, Mr. Babagana Ahmadu, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the implementation of a project aimed at strengthening local capacities to address inter-communal violence and find sustainable solutions to its root causes in Darfur, Sudan. The project is funded under the UN-China Peace and Security Sub-Fund of the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF). The ceremony was held at UNAMID's Liaison Office in Sudan's capital, Khartoum.

Through this project, UNAMID, FAO and Government of Sudan Ministries of Agriculture and Animal Resources

and Health, local authorities and native administrations, NGOs in West and South Darfur will demarcate migratory routes, animal gathering sites, excavate haffirs (water catchment reservoirs), rehabilitate hand-pumps, construct veterinary clinics, health centres, police posts and a basic school along the corridors of migratory routes in hotspot areas.

In South Darfur, through extensive engagement by state authorities and native administrations with UNAMID and FAO, the demarcation of 225 km of migratory routes in 9 hotspot localities was identified as a priority to prevent recurrent conflicts triggered by farm destructions. Providing two haffirs and four veterinary clinics as ancillary services to be established along those routes, is deemed a com-

plementary priority for sustainability and maximum impact in the identified areas.

West Darfur is endowed with arable land for farming and livestock rearing, making the state attractive for seasonal migration of nomadic herders from North Darfur and Chad. These seasonal migrations exacerbate conflict between farmers and nomadic herders as a result of increased demand for pasture and water resources. In order to address this cyclic phenomenon, 20 km of the Arara-Gerjira migratory route will be demarcated and two water points and a veterinary clinic established along the route.

Last December, UNAMID initiated a proposal for above project, this, as reflected above, has since been approved under the UNPDF.

UNAMID conducts an awareness campaign against sexual violence in conflict in Golo, Central Darfur



Hundreds of people, comprising community leaders, women and youth groups attended an awareness raising campaign event and capacity-building workshop on the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, organized by UNAMID's Human Rights Section and the Gender Advisory Unit (GAU) from 29-31 July 2019, in Golo, central Darfur.

During the campaign launch event on 29 July, the Mission's Human Rights Team introduced participants to basic International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, with special focus on Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), whilst the Rule of Law Team took the participants through the process of accessing justice for survivors of sexual violence, including

the steps involved in reporting incidents to eventual prosecution of cases in courts of law.

Addressing almost 400 participants, including 125 women, UNAMID Chief of Staff, Luke Mhlaba, noted that ending sexual violence in conflict is not only about respecting the rights of women, but also addressing the fundamental question of sustainable peace in Darfur in general and the Jebel Marra area.

In his remarks, Golo Locality Commissioner, Hassan Hussein Hassan, stated that government authorities at the federal, state and locality levels continue to work hard to ensure stability for the local community and appealed to the armed rebel factions operating in the Jebel Marra area to lay down their weapons and join the peace process. "Rest assured that Golo locality

officials will continue to strive to achieve positive action for women in terms of respect of their human rights. We strongly urge all men in the local community to treat women with respect, adding that this position has religious acceptance," Mr. Hassan added.

Addressing participants, UNAMID Senior Women Protection Adviser, Ms. Ruth Kibiti, indicated that the main focus of the campaign is to raise awareness on women's human rights; draw attention to issues relating to sexual violence in conflict; take stock of the gains made and obstacles endured in ending sexual violence in conflict; strengthen women protection networks in Camps for internally displaced persons and ensure that women's rights are taken seriously by all.

Ms. Kibiti focused on the sur-

vivor-centered approach, which advocates for placing the survivor of sexual violence at the center of any response, including the referral pathway. “We urge participants not to discriminate against or to stigmatize rape survivors but to instead support them to get immediate medical attention, report the incident and initiate legal action against the perpetrators and help them access psychosocial and livelihood support,” Ms. Kibiti stated.

UNAMID Chief, Gender Advisory Unit, Ms. Judith Mirembe appealed to the men present to become male champions of women’s rights and not violate them. She called on all participants to unite to explore ways of ending conflict in the Jebel Marra area.

The campaign focused capacity-building workshop was later held in the same Golo Locality, Central Darfur from 30-31 July and was attended by over one hundred participants, including 50 women.

Workshop presentations focused on enhancing skills on survivor-centered approach and awareness raising on CRSV, sexual violence, human rights, GBV guiding principles, grave violations against children and Gender Based Violence (GBV) referral pathway as well as advocacy for the elimination of CRSV/GBV/SGBV and other forms of impunity and human rights violations affecting women, girls, men and boys in the community.

UNAMID Pakistani peacekeepers construct children’s park in Kabkabiya, North Darfur



On the occasion of the United Nations Day’s commemoration on 24 October, UNAMID Force Commander, Lt. General Leonard Ngondi, inaugurated a children’s park constructed by Pakistani peacekeepers who are currently serving with UNAMID and are based in Kabkabiya, North Darfur.

The children’s park, the first of each kind in the locality, was skilfully built by Pakistan Battalion-8 Contingent members within the school grounds of the Jebel Cee Girls School, in Kabkabiya using local resources. The Contingent members had noted during their patrols in the area, that there is a dire need

for recreational facilities for the children in the area where children can enjoy “being children” out of harm’s way. Having noted the need, the Contingent mobilized resources and constructed the park. This facility will serve as a safe and attractive playground for healthy recreational activities for children in the 6 to 12 year age group.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Lt. Gen Leonard Ngondi, commended the Pakistani peacekeepers for their remarkable efforts in constructing the playground using own resources. He also noted that the handover of the children’s park to the local community, is an

other feather in cap of the peacekeepers in promoting peace under the auspices of the UNAMID transition peace building initiative.

“This is a remarkable gesture from the Pakistani Contingent as our children will have a modern playground to enjoy with their age mates, Mr. El Tayeb Abukar, Shar-tai of Kabkabiya stated at the handover ceremony. “The Pakistanis continue to assist our community in many ways, besides patrolling, free medical clinics and providing some school stationery for our schools. We really appreciate their presence in our area,” the Sheikh of Sheikhs emphasized.

UN SLFs conduct training workshop for female police officers in North Darfur



United Nations State Liaison Functions (SLFs) in North Darfur, in collaboration with UNICEF and Family and Child Protection Unit in North Darfur, conducted a five-day training workshop on the unit management, gender sensitive approach to policing, human rights and sexual gender-based violence. Fifty participants, including Sudan female police officers, investigators and social workers attended the training. Photo by Koné Mouroulaye, UNAMID.

United Nations State Liaison Functions (UNSLFs) in North Darfur in collaboration with UNICEF and Family and Child Protection Unit of North Darfur State, on 12 November launched a five-day training workshop on the management of Family and Child Protection Unit (FCPU) desks and Gender Sensitive Approach to policing, human rights, sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) and standard operating procedures for Government of Sudan (GoS) female police officers in North Darfur.

The workshop attended by 50 GoS female police officers, including 34 investigators and 16 social workers, was aimed at strengthening the capacity of the participants and their delivery qualities.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Brig. Gen. Abdullah Ali Mohamed, representative of North Darfur Police Commissioner, expressed his appreciation to UNAMID and UNICEF for their continuous support to Sudan Police component in North Darfur and commended the fruitful cooperation with both organizations. “We

have benefited from several capacity building programs through our good partnership with UNAMID and UNICEF, this support has helped our officers to improve the quality of service delivery to the local community,” said Gen. Mohammed.

He emphasized that participants were selected from only female police component due to the key role women play in the society, adding that women are pillars in the family setting as they represent the backbone of society, without them no society can survive.

Speaking on behalf on UN SLFs, Mr. Abdullah Fadil, who is also UNICEF Country Director in Sudan, welcomed the huge participation of female police officers in the workshop, describing the role of woman in the protection of the family and child as crucial.

He commended the long and fruitful partnership between UNICEF and Sudan Police Component, especially the Family and Child Protection Unit. He further stated that UNAMID and UNICEF would continue to provide adequate sup-

port to family and child protection units in all the Darfur States to help them discharge their human and rule of law responsibilities.

Mr. Fadil assured participants that UNICEF would remain supportive to their efforts after the eventual exit of UNAMID from Darfur, indicating that Sudan was passing through a critical moment which requires joint efforts from all partners and people of Sudan to help the country achieve its targeted goals.

He called on the participants to make the best use of the opportunity to foster their knowledge and experiences to provide adequate protection to family and children in the State.

Lt. Col. Abulhassan Al Obeid, Director of Family and Child Protection Unit in North Darfur, expressed his gratitude to UNAMID and UNICEF for organizing the training. He indicated that the family and child protection unit was established in North Darfur in 2008 and that the current premises of the unit in El Fasher were inaugurated in 2015 and constructed by UNAMID.

UNAMID organizes outreach awareness campaign on imminent closure of its headquarters in south Darfu



UNAMID's Communications and Public Information Section (CPIS) launched on 29 September 2019, a two-week awareness raising campaign on the imminent closure of the Mission's Sector South HQ in Nyala. The campaign aimed at sensitizing the local communities in Nyala town and in the four internally displaced persons camps (Ottash, Dereig, Al Salam and Kalma) on UNAMID transition and to emphasize that the premises and assets handed over to local entities be utilized for civilian purposes such as expanding universities faculties, health centers, police stations as well as women and youth centers. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

UNAMID's Communications and Public Information Section (CPIS) on 29 September launched a two-week awareness raising campaign on the Mission's transition process and the imminent closure of its Headquarters in Nyala, South Darfur.

From 26 September to 2 October, CPIS Team held focus group discussions with leaders from four internally displaced persons (IDPs) Camps namely Otash, Dereig, Al Salaam and Kalma and shared aspects of the drawdown and transition the Mission is undertaking, including the imminent closure of the Super Camp in Nyala. CPIS also had a meeting in Nyala town on the same topics with local government representatives, journalists, religious leaders, community leaders, women and youth groups and native administration leaders.

More than 500 people participated in the focus group discussions in the five locations where CPIS Team highlighted the Mission's transitional plans involving partnership with UNCT in

the State Liaison Functions (SLFs) and the Mission's insistence that UN premises and assets handed over to local entities are to be utilized for civilian purposes such as expanding universities, health centers, police stations, women and youth centers ..etc.

Participants underlined the need for UNAMID presence as an impartial body to mediate conflicts and to support in the collection of weapons in Darfur to ensure durable peace, beneficial to all, is attained in the region.

"It is important for UNAMID to further engage the new (Sudanese) Government on any decision on future UN presence in Darfur, following UNAMID exit from the region," said Ms. Ahlam Hamid, the Secretary of all the Darfurian IDPs and Refugees camps.

Mr. Mudathir Adam Ishag, Representative of Youth at Otash IDPs camp, added: "Darfur is lacking in basic services such as water, health, education to motivate IDPs to return to their places of origin as we fear the relapse into conflict after withdrawal

of UNAMID from Darfur."

Local participants also called on the Mission to build the capacity of the local police to take over the responsibility of protecting IDPs camps before its withdrawal from Darfur.

The Director of Culture and Information at the State Ministry of Education, Mr. Sidig Mohammed, urged the participants to disseminate the information received in the meetings to the local community that premises and assets handed over by UNAMID are intended for the benefit of the local communities in South Darfur.

The second week of the awareness raising campaign entailed radio broadcasts on Nyala radio, spearheaded by UNAMID personalities through which they reiterated the Mission's transition and pending exit from Darfur..

Similar awareness raising campaigns on UNAMID transition will be held in Menawashei, South Darfur, and Golo in Central Darfur before the end of 2019.



UNAMID Outreach: Making a Difference in Golo, central Darfur

BY MOHAMAD ALMAHADY

The protection of civilians in Darfur, was high on UNAMID's agenda when the Mission established the Temporary Operating Base (TOB) in Golo, Central Darfur, yet the investment has paid off as the Mission's community outreach activities have had a far-reaching effect in fostering peace among the local communities.

On establishing the TOB, which began in 2017 and became fully functional

in mid-2018, the need to pro-actively sensitize the local community on UNAMID's role in the community quickly became apparent, as this was the first ever UN peacekeeping presence in the area.

Through its Community Outreach Unit, UNAMID Communications and Public Information Section (CPIS), immediately embarked on a series of initiatives with a grassroots focus, to

reach out to people in the Golo area and disseminate information about its role, mandate and the peace process. Such activities included hosting open days, music concerts, cultural festivals, workshops and sporting events, among other initiatives.

"These activities and events are a conduit to disseminate information and an effective channel for the Mission's leadership to communicate



with people that they would otherwise never meet,” said Chief CPIS, Musi Khumalo. She added that this approach serves as a confidence-building mechanism that can reach people, especially those in high-conflict areas, who may not have any other source of information.

In Golo, UNAMID, working with diverse partners through carefully designed outreach programmes, chose to focus on helping the people in the area to understand the peace process and UNAMID’s role in that process by creating platforms on which the host community could tell its own stories to one another

and to the world. This has helped to strengthen cultural norms that have been weakened through years of conflict and displacement, thus creating the social conditions necessary for durable peace. Influencers and communities unreachable via other channels were the principal focus for the first stage of the community outreach campaign as these individuals would cascade further information learned and gathered.

Open days where different community members come together in a real harmonized manner, interact and exchange various views, are an effective mechanism through which the Mission delivers its messages and disseminates information such as the importance of peace, coexistence and respect among different people living together regardless of race, political affiliation or ethnic group.

“These open days, comprising performances by local musicians, handicraft markets by women, and painting competitions, are a great opportunity to inspire the youth to choose the path of peace as the way to fulfill their dreams, build a bright future, promote the culture of forgiveness and tolerance, create solidarity, enhance brotherhood and encourage dialogue amongst various sections of society,” says Makarim Mohammed, CPIS Community Outreach Officer.

In Rockero, 12 kilometers north east of Golo TOB, UNAMID organized an open day that attracted a large crowd from various surrounding villages to interact and exchange views in a peaceful and friendly atmosphere.

Speaking at the gathering, the Acting Commissioner of the north Jebel Marra Locality, Mr. Issam El Deen Rajab, expressed gratitude to the Mission’s work in the area, despite challenges.

“UNAMID’s initiative to access northern Jebel Marra, despite challenges such as rough roads, has opened access for the humanitarian community to regularly visit the area and assist the local population,” he said.

Abdallah Hassan, the Youth representative in the Locality, commended UNAMID efforts to strengthen

relationships and promote harmony among the different communities living together.

“Local songs that were performed during this open day, have definitely changed our perceptions and enhanced our appreciation of each other. The messages of peace in the songs promote a lifestyle we should all aspire to, a lifestyle free of conflict,” Mr. Hassan added.

Workshops for women praise singers (Hakamats) were also held in Golo town, in conjunction with the local Women’s Association. These workshops are meant to equip the influential Hakamats with skills to use their praise singing skills and repertoire to reinforce peaceful co-existence in the community. A Hakama has a great role to play in promoting peace in the communities as recognizable local songs can bring peace to war-fatigued areas like Golo, if used in the right manner. These chants and songs can bring people together and mitigate conflicts, tensions and disputes between communities living together especially farmers and herders who are frequently at loggerheads with each other over land, especially during rainy and harvest seasons.

“I am now a new Hakama. I fully understand my changed role of peace builder through chanting for peace and peaceful co-existence in our society,” said 30-year old Khadija Idriss Khamis at the end of a Hakamat workshop.

Another workshop participant, 27-year old Rugaya Abakar, observed that in the past, Hakamats used to compose and sing songs of war. After attending the workshop, she pledged to “use the songs to unite the people as we learned that these songs are important in the peace process. Local songs are very powerful and have impact in the minds of men who are truly touched by them. Let us use these songs in the right way, to build communities, not break them.”

As a result of these various initiatives, particularly those related to women’s empowerment, the participation of women in decision making, reconciliation and peace process mechanisms



has increased. An example is the establishment of the women forum for peace, Darfur Women Talking Peace, a place for women to freely discuss peace initiatives they can undertake in Golo town and nearby Rockero. Additionally, at these fora, women learn about their basic human rights, prevention of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV), how to combat harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage, hygiene in the home and income generating projects like pasta-making. Football has a massive following in

During one such football tournament in Rockero, the Shartay (Native Administrative leader), Mr. Adam Ateem, urged the youth to focus their energies in sensitizing their communities on the advantages of peaceful coexistence, especially in the conflict-affected Jebel Marra area. "Youth are key players in peace building, peaceful coexistence and development. I appeal to young people to use these football tournaments to educate your parents, friends and neighbors about the importance of peace and stability in any given society, as

tionships among various segments of society, thereby consolidating peace and stability.

UNAMID also plays a vital role in supporting people in such remote areas like Golo, to access information related to their survival through the distribution of solar wind-up radio sets to members of the local Union of Visually Impaired People and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the camps and surrounding villages. The project is part of the Mission's ongoing support to vulnerable communities in Darfur and is meant to assist the host communities gain easy access to information on local and global events, in addition to listening to peace messages derived from various UNAMID activities and its ongoing transition process.

The observance of UN Days like the United Nations' day, International day of Peace, International Peacekeepers' day, and International Women's day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, among others is key in drawing communities and the Mission together. Strong messages that promote peace, enhance coexistence and foster social cohesion, are shared through drama, songs and the distribution of promotional materials. Speaking at a United Nations Day event commemoration held in Golo town last October, Mr. Aldugooni Alameen, the

To achieve its core mandate that centres around protection of civilians, support and facilitation of humanitarian access, mediation between government of Sudan and armed movements to convince them to join peace process, African Union- United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) uses various tools to ensure proper and affective delivery of its messages to the target groups.

Darfur and in Sudan in general. Darfurians play football on any open field at the end of each day. After observing this passion for football in Golo, UNAMID decided to maximize on this love for the sport to disseminate messages about the benefits of peaceful coexistence among communities, hoping that this would culminate in durable peace, stability and development.

development projects can take place where peace exists," he said. "Football tournaments are a great opportunity for us, the people of Jebel Marra to rethink our future and plan properly to reform our war affected communities," Mr. Ateem added. UNAMID believes that engaging local communities in such social activities, enhances cooperation and builds rela-



Acting Commissioner of Central Jebel Marra Locality, appreciated UNAMID's role in raising awareness among community members especially on the mission mandate and human rights as well as its efforts towards restoring peace to Darfuri people.

"UNAMID events contribute positively in raising awareness in our communities. Now our people in Golo and surrounding villages fully understand the Mission's mandate. They also realized the importance of unity and respect for each other," he said.

"Rest assured that our local government will continue to cooperate with UNAMID to enable them to accomplish their peace-making goals and fulfill their mandate," Mr. Alameen added.

Information and educational materials incorporating messages on the Mission's activities are distributed to event participants for residual, more lasting messaging long after the day event has occurred. UNAMID branded exercise books, volleyballs, footballs, T-shirts, caps, school bags, pens and water rollers are well received as they also meet the communities' needs.

Additionally, quiz competitions on the Mission's mandate as well as the ongoing transition process are conducted to further enhance the communities' understanding of UNAMID presence in Golo and the rest of Darfur.

All these efforts are aimed at restoring peace, development and stability to people of Darfur and promote co-existence, harmony and social fabric as well as tolerance among various communities.

The diversity of cultures in this part of Sudan is not a disadvantage, as it constitutes a solid foundation and an enriching factor that augments stability, prosperity and sustainable development in the region.

In terms of image-enhancement, community outreach activities serve as a conduit to cultivate understanding and, ultimately, support for Mission operations and for the peace process, changing negative perceptions where they exist and reinforcing positive ones, as well as assisting in inter- and intra-community dialogue while building links between the Mission and the host community in Golo and the rest of the Jebel Marra region. Going forward, UNAMID, through the Community Outreach Unit, will continue to work closely with partners in Golo and the rest of Darfur, the United Nations country team (UNCT) and other humanitarian actors to ensure that its core mandate is achieved and peace and stability are restored to help transform the lives of the people the Mission serves in Darfur.



“I would like to assure the people of Darfur that during the rest of its tenure, the Mission shall continue its **“stay-and-deliver policy”** and shall continue to serve the people of Darfur until the last day.”

— JSR Jeremiah Mamabolo

UNAMID Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator, Jeremiah Mamabolo, on 20 November held a press conference in Khartoum, Sudan and touched on variety of issues pertaining to UNAMID’s diverse activities and the Darfur peace process.



Sudanese people to achieve their aspirations for Freedom, Peace and Justice.

UN Security Council Resolution 2495 (2019):

UN Security Council recently adopted its Resolution 2495 on 31 October 2019. This Resolution extends UNAMID's mandate until 31 October 2020, maintaining current troop ceilings of 4,050 military and 2,500 police personnel and maintain all team sites for mandate implementation until 31 March 2020 when the Council would review the Mission's mandate.

This resolution maintains the same concept of operations for UNAMID set out in UNSCs 2363 and 2429 based on the two-pronged approach of peacekeeping in the Jebel Marra area and peace building in the rest of Darfur through a whole-of-system approach where the Mission works closely with the UN Country team to avoid gaps resulting from UNAMID's eventual exit from Darfur. This transition is achieved through State Liaison Functions (SLFs) which that are now fully operational in four out of

any peace agreement resulting from the Juba peace process as reflected in the transitional government's strategic priority to achieve a fair and comprehensive peace.

ii. Support to peace building activities by strengthening the SLFs and expanding them into the Jebel Marra Area of Operations, thus covering all five Darfur states.

iii. Protection of Civilians, monitoring and reporting on Human Rights (including the rights of women and children) and facilitation of Humanitarian access as well as protecting humanitarian workers operating in Darfur.

The Resolution also instructs UNAMID to keep all its remaining Team Sites and not hand them over until a further decision is made by the Security Council, except for Nyala which is the Mission's Sector South Headquarters.

Sector South/Nyala Headquarters Handover:

On 19 October, UNAMID handed over its largest Super camp in Dar-

"Our priority continues to be, in terms of this Resolution, the protection of civilians, monitoring and reporting on human rights (including the rights of women and children) and facilitation of humanitarian access as well as protecting humanitarian workers operating in Darfur."

OPENING REMARKS:

A warm welcome to you all, to this press conference that indeed marks quite an eventful period for UNAMID and Sudan. Let me start by expressing my appreciation to the media for consistently highlighting events in Darfur and keeping the region on the global agenda, while ensuring the community is kept abreast of developments on UNAMID's work.

This is the first press conference I hold after the revolution that sparked off less than a year ago and for which some brave young men and women paid the ultimate price in order for the

the five Darfur states (north, south, east, west). Since January this year, UNAMID personnel have been co-located with colleagues from other UN Agencies Funds and Programmes to jointly conduct peacebuilding projects with the Transitional Government of Sudan.

UNSC 2495 also determines three operational priorities for UNAMID,

i. To support the ongoing peace process; including mediation between the Government of Sudan and the Darfuri armed movements, the national peace commission as well as supporting the implementation of

fur, located in Nyala, south Darfur to officials from the Government of Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The total value of assets handed over in Nyala is 99.4 million US Dollars. In this context UNSC Resolution 2495 acknowledged the commitment of the Government of Sudan to use this team site and other team sites previously handed over to the Government for exclusively civilian end-user purposes which are in line with UN rules and regulations.

I would like to inform that the Nyala super-camp handover went without a glitch. We hope that the unfortu-

■ JSR Mamabolo Speaks to the Press

nate incidents of wanton looting of the UNAMID Super Camp in El Geneina, on 14 and 15 May, by the local population and government security apparatus and the vandalism of the offices of the International NGO World Vision International and WFP in south Darfur on 20 June by protesters, are now incidents of the past. It is our sincere hope that such incidents will not recur.

Darfur Armed Movements Urged to Join the Peace Process:

I once again call upon the Government of Sudan and Armed groups alike to work with the UN and other international actors to support humanitarian access to all remote areas, in Darfur in particular, to en-

We hope that negotiations at this juncture will provide a more level-playing field for all views to be heard and for compromises to be made for the sake of the People of Sudan and their aspiration for Freedom, Peace and Justice.

I would also like to assure the people of Darfur that during the rest of its tenure, the Mission shall continue its “stay-and-deliver policy” and shall continue to serve the people of Darfur until the last day.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION:

Q. Ms. Nidal Agib, Ramatan News Agency. What is the evaluation of UNAMID’s work amid accusations of failure by the Mission to protect civilians and the daily recorded in-

where it exits. As you know, the responsibility for security, lies with the Government of Sudan.

Q. Mr. Mohamed Fazari, Tana for media. In your opening remarks, you mentioned that UNAMID will remain in Sudan until 2020, so what are the priorities for UNAMID in the remaining months? Could you give us an overall assessment of the humanitarian situation in Darfur?

JSR: Priority for the Mission would be to support the ongoing peace process, to support the mediation that is taking place between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur armed movements. On this aspect, UNAMID will focus on support to the recently created National Peace Commission as well as supporting the implementation of any peace agreement resulting from the Juba [South Sudan] peace process. Obtaining a peace agreement is reflected by the current Sudan Transitional Government as a strategic priority in achieving fair and comprehensive peace.

Secondly, we support peacebuilding activities through strengthening of the State Liaison Functions (SLFs) concept that I mentioned earlier with advanced plans in place to expand the concept to the Jebel Marrra area where conflict still exists. This will be achieved by ensuring that SLFs are in place in all five states of Darfur as part of the UN’s peacebuilding agenda.

Our priority continues to be, in terms of this Resolution, the protection of civilians, monitoring and reporting on human rights (including the rights of women and children) and facilitation of humanitarian access as well as protecting humanitarian workers operating in Darfur.

Regarding the humanitarian situation in Darfur, the situation will not immediately change because a signed agreement is in place. It takes time. I think there is a good intention on the current government to transform the situation for the better, but this needs time to evolve. There are IDPs still in

“It is fair to say Sudan is on the right track. We all need to support the initiative of the people of Sudan and the government and to ensure that we tackle problems in a timely manner. This requires not only the commitment of the government and people of Sudan but also a huge amount of support from the international community.”

sure the timely and effective delivery of humanitarian aid. It is extremely important that as the peace process in Sudan moves forward, the United Nations continues to provide basic humanitarian support to the people of Darfur. We congratulate the parties to the Juba peace talks for reaching an agreement on the thorny issue of access and humanitarian relief.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the real opportunity that the December [2018] revolution has created for achieving a fair and comprehensive peace in Darfur and the whole of Sudan. I urge the Sudanese political forces to come to the negotiating table to utilise this opportunity for the benefit of the Sudanese people and realise lasting peace. We call on the Sudanese Liberation Army/Abdelwahid Alnur, to reconsider its position and join the ongoing efforts in Juba.

cidents that occur in Darfur? What was the deal between UNAMID and the former regime about the Mission’s withdrawal prior to the attainment of durable peace?

JSR: As you know, the former regime wanted UNAMID to leave promptly. The regime maintained that it can take care of Sudan and did not need UNAMID support, adding that the Mission has realized its role and should leave Sudan to allow the country to focus on peacebuilding. However, the newly appointed Prime Minister, Dr Abdallah Hamdok, has requested the Mission to stay insisting that UNAMID’s departure should be closely linked to the peace process to ensure there are no gaps. UNAMID will do its best to build rule of law capacities so that the Government of Sudan is able to effectively takeover in those areas



On 20 November 2019, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mr. Jeremiah Mamabolo (right) held a press conference in the Sudan capital, Khartoum. The JSR briefed the local and international media on the Mission's new mandate, UNAMID's activities and the Darfur peace process. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

the Camps who are yet to return to their places of origin. This is a problem that still needs to be resolved. The peace negotiations currently underway in Juba are a good starting point. In Darfur, the root causes of the conflict remain unresolved. Addressing these root causes would be a good starting point, but I think it's early to expect that everything will be fine just because a peace agreement has been signed.

It is fair to say Sudan is on the right track. We all need to support the initiative of the people of Sudan and the government and to ensure that we tackle these problems in a timely manner. This requires not only the commitment of the government and people of Sudan but also a huge amount of support from the international community.

Q. Mr. Mohamed Amin, Bloomberg. We know that violent and looting incidents occurred during the hand-

over of a UNAMID Sector Headquarters in west Darfur. Reports suggest that these sites have since been handed over to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) by the Government of Sudan. What precautions have been taken by the Mission to prevent recurrence of such violence during future handovers and what measures is UNAMID taking to ensure the UN facilities would not be used for violence in the region?

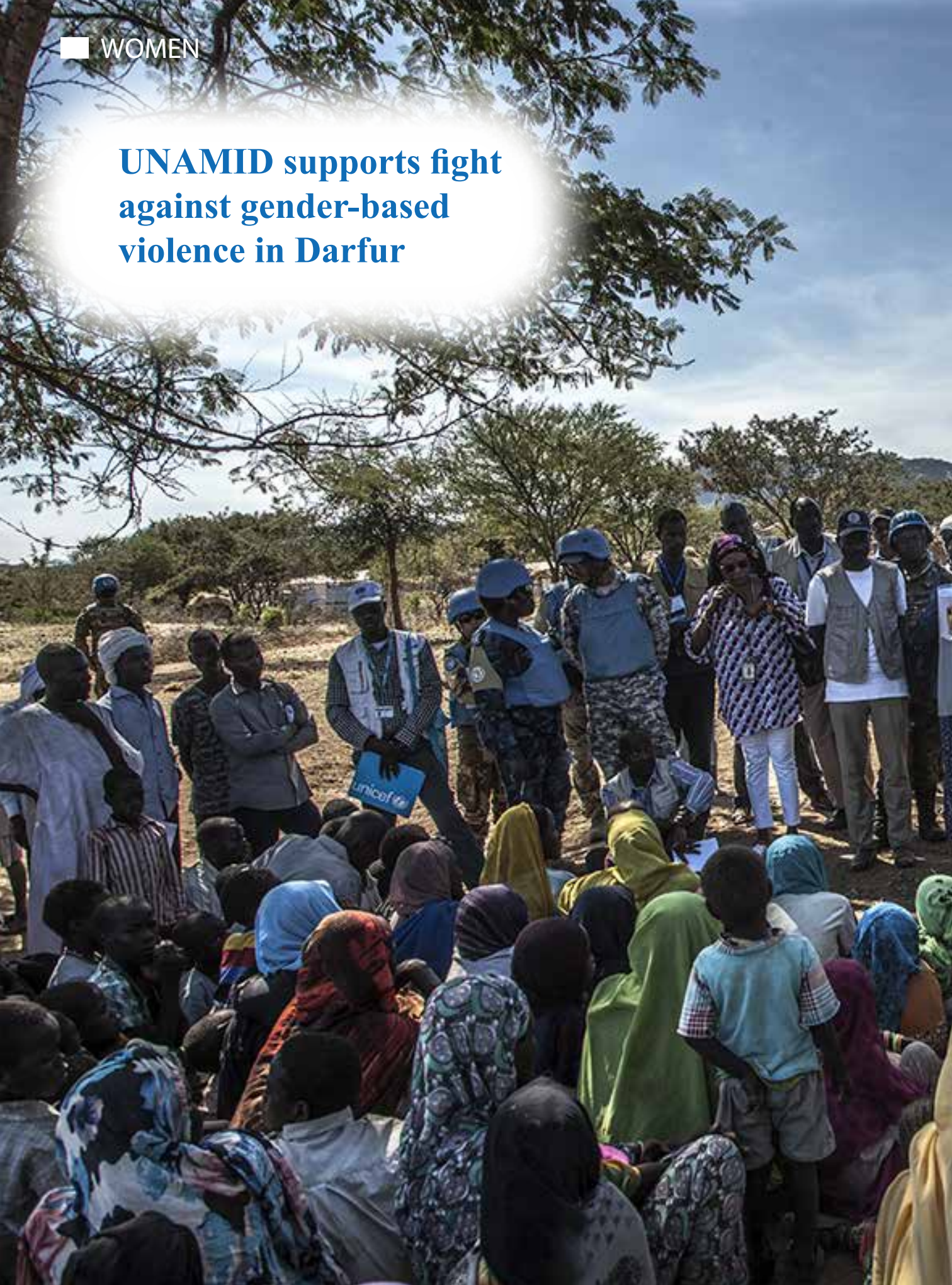
JSR: The incident that took place in ElGenina, west Darfur on 14 and 15 May, where there was looting and vandalization of UN assets, was very unfortunate. We continue to condemn this behavior in the strongest possible terms. That occurrence was an embarrassment not just for UNAMID or the international community but to Sudan as well because Sudan in a member of the United Nations. This was vandalism act against yourself, but

I think there was a lot of regret from everybody.

In contrast, the recent handover in Nyala, south Darfur, went smoothly and I want to thank the Federal and South Darfur Governments for their collaboration and cooperation in ensuring that security measures to mitigate any disturbance were in place. In fact, the Wali (Governor) of south Darfur state and several representatives of committees who prepared for the seamless handover of the Sector Headquarters attended the handover ceremony, which proceeded without a hitch.

UNAMID also has a formal commitment from the Government of Sudan through a Decree signed by Chairman of the Sudan Sovereignty Council, General Al Burhan that clearly states that all sites handed over to the Government of Sudan by UNAMID, will be used for civilian purposes. We hold them to their word.

UNAMID supports fight against gender-based violence in Darfur







Sexual violence, including rape, causes deep wounds and its scars persist long after the fact. Survivors' dignity and integrity are stripped away twice: through the actual violence and the stigma that follows. Rape is about power, humiliation, control and builds on deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, discrimination and inequality.

BY SAID MSONDA

Sexual violence, including rape, causes deep wounds and its scars persist long after the fact. Survivors' dignity and integrity are stripped away twice: through the actual violence and the stig-

ma that follows. Rape is about power, humiliation, control and builds on deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, discrimination and inequality.

"Orange the World" – is the

title of a painting that won the hearts of many during the launch of the 2019 observance of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) held at the United Nations-African Union



Hybrid operation in Darfur's (UNAMID) Headquarters in Zalingei, central Darfur on 25 November. This amazing, to-the-point painting by well-known Darfurian fine artist, Sayida Musa, depicts a brighter future for women in Darfur, a hoped-for a future without violence.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent and upsetting human rights violations in the world which is

somewhat entangled with local traditions and cultures or related social practices in most countries. A recent statement by the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, points to around 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) worldwide having experienced forced sex (forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts) at some point in their life. Out of these, 9 million were victimized in 2018 alone. In many countries, adolescent girls are most at risk of forced sex by a current or ex-husband, partner or boyfriend. Based on data from 30 countries, only one per cent ever sought professional help.

UNAMID, through its multi-faceted components, has placed major focus in the fight against gender-based violence in response to the reports it receives on the mat-

ter daily. The observance of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign is one tool utilized by the Mission to publicize the dangers of various forms of violence perpetrated against women in Darfur.

ter awareness and mobilize people to bring about change in people's hearts and minds on this unwarranted social scourge. UNAMID's Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator (JSR/JCM) Jeremiah Mamabolo, presided over the launching ceremony for the Day held under the localized theme: "Together for Sustainable Protection of Women and Children from Gender-Based Violence." The colorful event, comprising a traditional handicraft display (speaking to the rich culture of the Darfuri people), a variety of cultural and drama shows by UNAMID Police including clearly messaged songs on the fight against GBV by local artists, among them Hakamat singers (women who used to sing war songs to encourage men to fight but now sing peace songs), attracted more than two hundred women and men

"The problem that made us flee from our areas of origin at the height of the conflict in Darfur 2003, has followed us to places where we thought would be safe havens for us, our IDPs camps. Rape is one of the challenges we face in Darfur, which is one of the most degrading things to happen to a woman."

—IDP woman leader in Darfur.

ter daily. The observance of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign is one tool utilized by the Mission to publicize the dangers of various forms of violence perpetrated against women in Darfur.

The 16-Day campaign is an annual international campaign that commences on 25 November—International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women—and runs until 10 December—Human Rights Day and aims to raise pub-

from Zalingei town and surrounding localities and actively participated in the day's activities meant to bring home the need to change attitudes and treat women better.

Ms. Rukheiya Bahradeen, a Zalingei Women Representative who attended above ceremony, remarked that: "Darfurian women have, over the years, endured numerous calamities and suffering during years of prolonged conflict, including gender-based violence. Empowering



women means providing them with education. Women should be trained to know their rights in the economic, political, cultural or social sphere but all this cannot be achieved unless more concerted attention is given to gender discrimination and elimination of gender-based violence in our society.” She also called on Darfuri women to unite to bring about positive change in their local and regional societies to build lasting peace. She added that women in Darfur shoulder countless responsibilities and that if they are well equipped with education and training skills, they can play a significant role in community building and social transformation for sustainable peace.

An IDP woman leader, Ms. Alma (not her real name) also spoke at the launch ceremony where she opined that women of Darfur are most vulnerable when they go out to fetch firewood and water. “We

are targeted when we go out on these necessary daily chores of collecting water and firewood to cook for the family. The rape and physical abuse we endure is ultimately a violation against our human rights and shows a lack of respect for the sanctity of our bodies. The problem that made us flee from our areas of origin at the height of the conflict in Darfur, has followed us to the places we thought would be safe havens for us, our IDPs camps.

Rape is one of the challenges we face in Darfur, which is one of the most degrading things to happen to a woman. Some of our colleagues who have been exposed to rape have lost their minds. They cannot even be re-integrated into their own society as they suffer from numerous psychosocial problems”.

Sexual violence, including rape,

causes deep wounds and its scars persist long after the fact. Survivors’ dignity and integrity are stripped away twice: through the actual violence and the stigma that follows. Stigma is everywhere; in the couple, in the family, in the community, in the state institutions, in the justice system and – mostly- in the silence that surrounds rape survivors. Rape is about power, humiliation, control and builds on deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, discrimination and inequality. Rape affects all sexes and gender, but women and girls are disproportionately targeted.

In her statement issued in time for this year’s launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the UN Human Rights Commissioner recalled that “ten years ago, the [UN] Security Council Resolution 1820, recognizing that conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, is a threat to peace and security, gave adequate prominence to an issue long considered only a by-product of war. Since then, the international community at large has been working to improve the collective prevention and response to sexual violence crimes. Yet, progress is slow and most places of the globe Governments have failed the victims,” adding that the objective of the Campaign is to “stand with rape survivors and to foster the conversation at the global level on the need for inclusive, proactive and sustainable programmes, policies, and resources to prevent and end rape.”

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has over the years adopted nine Resolutions on women, peace and security, the latest of which is 2467, which was adopted in April 2019. UNSC Resolution 2467 calls for a “holistic, survivor-centered approach in the prevention and response to con-



flict-related sexual violence.”

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, in his statement for this year’s Campaign, said his organization is “committed to ending all forms of violence against women and girls, stressing that abuses against women are among the world’s most horrific, persistent and widespread human rights violations, affecting one in every three women in the world. That means someone around you. A family member, a co-worker, a friend. Or even you yourself.” UNSG Guterres underscored the fact that “sexual violence against women and girls is rooted in centuries of male domination and that the gender inequalities that fuel rape culture are essentially a question of power imbalances, stressing that stigma, misconceptions, underreporting and poor enforcement of the laws only per-

petuate impunity. And rape is still being used as a horrendous weapon of war. All of that must change now.” He further called on governments, the private sector, civil society and people everywhere to take a firm stand against sexual violence and misogyny.

To support the Sudanese campaign and respond to the scourge of SGBV, UNAMID through its different sections and units, has over the years, undertaken a series of awareness raising activities such as seminars on GBV, sensitization on Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and protection of civilians to nomadic communities, public campaigns through public gatherings (e.g. International Day of Persons with Disability and Human Rights Day), visits to hospitals and workshops to the most vulnerable women (the elderly, physically impaired and widows) in internally displaced persons

(IDPs) camps in Darfur.

In addition, the Mission has helped establish the Women Protection Networks (WPN), who act as early warning sources through which the women can identify the hotspot and share the information with UNAMID to facilitate a fitting response in collaboration with state or federal authorities. The early-warning source greatly assists in delivering targeted patrols. Women Protection Networks also provide support to victims by directing them to seek medical help and even raise awareness to decrease the stigma.

It is women like Darfurian fine artist, Sayida Musa, who continue to carry the torch on the fight against GBV through their partnership with UNAMID and use of their natural artistic talents to shine the spotlight on the urgent need to stop gender-based violence in their communities. ■



USG Lacroix and AUC Chergui conduct three-day visit to Sudan

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Smail Chergui from 7 to 9 October, conducted a three-day visit to Sudan, where they engaged the country's newly appointed transitional government and discussed the future of UNAMID.

In Khartoum, the two leaders met separately the new Prime Minister, Dr. Abdalla Hamdok and Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, a member of Sudan's Transitional Sovereignty Council, and discussed UNAMID transition as well as UN and AU support to the Government of Sudan during this transitional period. They also met African Union Ambassadors, United Nations Country Team members, and held the 27th meeting of the AU, UN and Government Tripartite Mechanism on UNAMID.

In addition, the delegation travelled to ElFasher, North Darfur, where they met the Wali (Governor) of North Darfur, Major General Malik Altaib Khojali, the Women's Protection Network (WPN) and UNAMID Senior Management, before addressing mission staff.







UN Deputy Secretary General visits Sudan

The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed,

from 26- 28 October, travelled to Sudan to discuss UN collaboration with various segments of society in Sudan, economic development and involvement of women in the transition currently underway in the country. During her trip, she met with the Prime Minister of Sudan, Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, other senior Government officials, civil society and women leaders in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. She later travelled to El Fasher, north Darfur, where she was welcomed by the State Wali (Governor) and met with UNAMID Senior Management and Staff, inaugurated a Human Rights Resource Center and interacted with members of the local women's union, including civil society.







African Ambassadors accredited to Sudan visit North Darfur

African Ambassadors accredited to Sudan from 3 to 4 December travelled to El Fasher, North Darfur, where they met with Government officials, UNAMID senior management and representatives of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Zam Zam Camp. The Ambassadors also visited the recently inaugurated Human Rights Resource Center constructed with support from UNAMID and UNDP through the State Liaison Functions (SLFs) Project at El Fasher, University.

During their meetings, the African Ambassadors discussed various issues related to the local security situation, reconciliation process, voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin and IDPs' challenges and concerns, including shortage of food and lack of education and health services.





Leather artistry a tool for peace:

An interview with Darfurian leather artist Aidarous

Leather artist, Mohammed Yousif Abdulrahman Aidarous, speaks to Voices of Darfur about his experience in shaping and sculpting on leather, which he deems critical in spreading the culture of peace and the urgent need to develop local youth skills in leather artistry in Darfur and the new Sudan.

BY SALAH MOHAMMED

47-year old Aidarous, was born in El Fasher, North Darfur. He attended his elementary school in El Fasher before proceeding to Kutum (north Darfur) for his high school certificate.

Aidarous is an extremely talented and distinguished leather artist who is renowned for his creativity in sculpting and painting on leather. Leather artistry is indeed an impactful tool used to promote Sudan's culture and traditions to the rest of the world. Aidarous believes that the local leather industry is just as important as other exports such as gold and oil and can contribute to the economic development of Darfur and renaissance in the Sudan.

VoD: When did you start painting

and sculpting on leather?

Aidarous: I learned leather artistry skills from my father and my grandfather who also worked in the same field. I had practical, hands-on training from my father, after which I self-skilled to keep pace with the ever-changing advancement in leather production and designing. I also studied and learned privately from colleagues in the same field in countries like Saudi Arabia and Chad. This has enabled me to adapt and embrace new methods of designing and painting on leather to produce a diverse range of attractive leather goods.

VoD: How would you describe the current state of the leather industry in Darfur?

Aidarous: Leather can be used to produce a variety of products such as handbags, wallets, shoes, carpets, laptop cases, belts as well as encaustics. Many Darfurians depend on leather artistry for their livelihoods such as locally made boats (Markoop) in El Geneina city (west Darfur) and Mellit (north Darfur). Many women use leather to creatively design and produce wallets and various accessories used to decorate camels and horses.

VoD: Describe your work with leather?

Aidarous: More than one method is used to shape and structure leather, including burning, using laser and computers. The leather industry can bring huge revenue to

Sudan if it is highly prioritized as a profitable industry, is given the desired attention by our government and value added through exporting manufactured leather products rather than raw material as the latter will increase the country's gross domestic income. Therefore, I appeal to our Government to pay attention to the leather industry, to promote it, encourage investment in this field, and provide training opportunities for young people in this exciting field of work.

VoD: As an artist, have you shared your experience and skills with the youth in Darfur?

Aidarous: I have participated in many workshops to train young people in leather artistry, especially in painting and sculpting on leather, to develop their skills and help them establish their own business to generate income for their families and their communities. I recently participated in a training workshop for youth, organized by the Faculty of Community Development at Al-Fasher University.

VoD: What options exist for the promotion of leather artistry in Darfur?

Aidarous: Actually, I have participated in many exhibitions and even won a gold medal during my participation in the Khartoum [Sudan] International Fair. I have presented some of my works to the Presidency of the Republic of Sudan in the city of Kassala, east Sudan, as well as produced gift items for UN-AMID staff who come from various countries thereby promoting Sudan leather products worldwide.

VoD: How would rate Sudan in the production of genuine leather products?

Aidarous: Sudan is one of the highly ranked countries in the world in leather artistry. Our country has huge potential in the leather industry, if marketed well. It has an estimated animal wealth of more than 140 million head of animals, in addition to the wild animal wealth of which reptile skins is the most requested.

More attention should be given



to the leather industry, including the development of small to medium-size handicraft businesses and the introduction of modern technology in creatively shaping and sculpting leather. Promotion of the leather industry and the numerous products it produces is key for the industry to thrive and survive.

VoD: What is the impact of conflict on the leather industry and arts in Darfur?

Aidarous: The conflict in Darfur affected everything and increased the suffering of people in most, if not all aspects of their daily lives. The war destroyed all infrastructure in the region and led to the displacement of citizens from their areas of origin to the main cities. This migration to the cities and towns, contributed to sharp increases in the price of materials, including leather, especially in Darfur which has many artists in this industry. The conflict also resulted in the reduction in local production due to the displacement of people from production areas. I strongly appeal for the immediate reintegration of IDPs into local communities as they can add a lot of value to the various cultural, arts and sporting fields.

VoD: In your view, do you feel that the recent political change in Sudan can contribute to the return of IDPs to their areas of origin?

Aidarous: Our government has a major role to play in rehabilitating areas of displacement, providing security and basic services such as water, health, and education, so

that IDPs can be motivated to return to these areas or their areas of origin and contribute to the rebuilding of Darfur and Sudan. For example, Netherlands is smaller than Darfur, but it is the major milk exporter in the world.

VoD: What is the role of citizens and youth in achieving peace and peaceful coexistence in Darfur?

Aidarous: The youth have a significant role in spreading the culture of peace and harmony among the people of Darfur, and the transitional government should encourage them to play this important role. Most of them are educated, but they need financial, material and moral support to be able to start their own businesses.

VoD: What do you see as your role in achieving sustainable peace in Darfur?

Aidarous: Artists in their various fields, poets, praise singers, musicians and athletes play easily play positive roles in mobilizing the citizens to work for peace, by calling for peaceful coexistence, peace, renounce war, tribalism and regionalism and work together for the development of Darfur and Sudan. For example, through sporting activities such as horse and camel racing that Darfur is famous for, artists and sports persons alike can bring people from different tribes and cultural and intellectual backgrounds together through. Likewise, folklore, heritage songs, even leather products decorated with appropri-



ate messaging, have a great impact and can also contribute to reducing conflict and spread the culture of tolerance and reconciliation among communities.

VoD: How do you see the role played by UNAMID in supporting dialogue and reconciliation in Darfur?

Aidarous: I like to extend my profound gratitude to UNAMID for its role in maintaining security and protecting civilians, especially in the villages and IDPs camps. The Mission has contributed immensely to the local population through establishing health and education facilities and rule of law institutions. UNAMID continues to play a great role in achieving reconciliation through its support for conferences and workshops. In addition, UNAMID peacekeepers particularly the Rwandan Battalion, were well involved in humanitarian initiatives to improve the education environment in El Fasher. Had it not been for the obstacles imposed by the previous government, UNAMID would have solved the Darfur conflict issue a long time ago.

I call upon UNAMID to provide a comprehensive report to the new Government of Sudan that explains the causes of conflict and solutions of the conflict in Darfur, as the Mission has experts in different areas,

especially in conflict resolution and peace building. The Mission can provide advice and solutions that can contribute to achieving a comprehensive and final peace in Darfur. I reiterate gratitude to UNAMID, especially the Communications and Public Information Section which has contributed to sensitizing citizens through cultural and sports programs, training workshops for youth, building the capacity of women in camps through income-generating projects and women's participation in dialogue to realize peace in Darfur, not forgetting the Section's ability to publicize the work of the Mission.

VoD: What is your view on UNAMID's transition process?

Aidarous: UNAMID existence in Darfur is very important, especially in this transitional period in Sudan. UNAMID presence as a neutral entity will contribute to the process of confidence building between the parties. The Mission will have a role in monitoring the peace agreement that the parties can reach, support the peace-building process and provide technical and logistical support to the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program.

VoD: Any message to the people of Darfur?

Aidarous: Leather artists like me

need immediate government support to revive our leather industry. We know we can make a profitable living from this industry and can publicize Darfur, even Sudan further through our products.

The current government led by Prime Minister Dr. Abdallah Hamdouk should take advantage of these experiences and invest the energies of youth to build and reconstruct what was destroyed by war during the past years and pass the laws that achieve justice and equality among Sudanese.

I appeal to the leaders of the armed movements who are still outside the country to return and participate in the ongoing peace negotiations with the transitional government to reach a comprehensive and justice peace for the people of Darfur and other marginalized areas. I would like to inform them that the joy of the Sudanese people will not be complete until they return to their homeland. I would like also to remind them that the government they were fighting against has gone and the causes of war and fighting are being addressed. Therefore, they must return to contribute to peacebuilding and development and put an end to the suffering of the people of Darfur.





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