

VOICES

of Darfur

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Painting for peace and love for fine art: An interview with Artist Elfadil Abdulrahman:



**UNAMID Supports Darfur
Women Participation in
Sudanese (Juba) Peace Talks**

**Interview with UNAMID's
New Director of the
Mission's Support Division,
Mr. Houston Fergusson.**

**Painting for peace and
love for fine art: An
interview with Artist Elfadil
Abdulrahman**

Editor

Musi Khumalo

Staff Writer

Salah Mohammed

Graphics & Design

Mutaz Ahmed

Photographers

Mohamad Almahady

Amin Ismail

Hamid Abdulsalam

Contributors

Said Msonda

Kone Mouroulaye

Mohamad Almahady

Translation

Rindala Eid

Eltahir Nourain Mohammed

Alawad Alawad

Ahmad Ibrahim

Abdalla Abdulraheem

Adam War

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 flickr.com/unamid-photo

Publications Unit
Communications and Public Information
Section (CPIS) - UNAMID
Email: unamid-publicinformation@un.org
Website: <https://unamid.unmissions.org>

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm pleased to introduce the March 2020 edition of its Voices of Darfur magazine, which 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. Noticeably absent in this edition, is COVID-19 related content as CPIS intends to dedicate the next Voices of Darfur magazine to the Mission's response and support to the fight against COVID-19 in Darfur." In an interview with Voices of Darfur, UNAMID's newly appointed Director of Mission Support Division, Mr. Houston Fergusson, gives an insightful look at the work of his Division, especially as it relates to the Mission's transition and drawdown processes. With a 42-year-old professional career under his belt, Mr. Fergusson has a wealth of experience in supporting complex and multidimensional UN field operations in conflict and post-conflict environments and field operations. The feature article entitled: 'UNAMID Supports Darfur Women's Participation in Sudanese Peace Talks' focusses on UNAMID's efforts to support Darfuri women to participate in Sudanese peace talks taking place in Juba, South Sudan. To date, the Mission has provided logistical and technical support to the women and organized some consultative conferences in El Fasher as part of the Mission's facilitation of consultation with stakeholders in Darfur and to offer participants a platform to select their representatives to the Sudanese Peace Talks in Juba. In another feature entitled: "Results of the United Nations Peacebuilding Efforts in Darfur through the State Liaison Function after SLFs: An innovative transition mechanism from peacekeeping to

peacebuilding in Darfur", we highlight the concept of establishing the UN State Liaison Function Offices (SLFs) in designated peacebuilding areas in north, south, west and east Darfur. UN SLFs programmatic activities are meant to ensure a smooth transition and prevent relapse into conflict and disruption of the peace continuum after UNAMID's eventual exit from Darfur at the end of October 2020. Establishment of these SLFs is in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2429 (2018), which endorsed a two-pronged approach – peacekeeping in the greater Jebel Marra and peacebuilding in the rest of Darfur.

The collection of photographs in the Photo Story, focuses on UNAMID Patrols: Building Trust with the Host Community In accordance with the Mission's core mandate of protection of civilians where UNAMID provides daily patrols to assess the situation in the internally displaced camps and villages in its area of its responsibility in the Darfur region. Through these short, medium and long-range patrols, UNAMID peacekeepers engage the host community as part of the Mission's confidence building measures.

"Finally, in our cover feature: 'Painting for peace with love for fine art', Voices of Darfur presents an interview with 36-year old fine artist, Alfadil Abdurahman. Born in Jebel Marra area, central Darfur, Elfadil's passion for fine art started at an early age. He later graduated with a degree in Geography at the University of Zalingei, central Darfur. He currently works as a secondary school teacher in his beloved hometown of Golo, in central Darfur." As Voices of Darfur continues to evolve as a news magazine, 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

Chief Communications and Public Information
Section (CPIS)

ON THE COVER



36-year old fine artist, Alfadil Abdurahman paints natural elements at his beloved hometown of Golo, in central Darfur. Mr. Abdurahman's passion for fine art started at an early age. He later graduated with a degree in Geography at the University of Zalingei, central Darfur. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.



Thousands of people, including women and children, from Zalingei town and surrounding villages, attend a Horse Racing Competition organized by UNAMID's Communications & Public Information Section in partnership with the local Horse Racing Union held in Zalingei, central Darfur. Photo by Amin Ismail, UNAMID.

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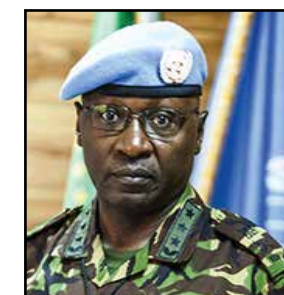
MISSION LEADERSHIP



Jeremiah Mamabolo
(South Africa)
Joint Special Representative/
Joint Chief Mediator



Anita Kiki Gbeho
(Ghana)
Deputy Joint Special Representative



Lieutenant General Leonard Ngondi
(Kenya)
Force Commander



Sultan Temuri
(Pakistan)
Acting Police Commissioner

UNAMID supports consultative conferences for IDPs and Darfur civil society for Sudan peace talks



El Fasher, north Darfur; The Joint Field Committee (JFC), consisting of the Transitional Government of Sudan (TGoS) and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)- Darfur Track in partnership with UNAMID, organized two consultative conferences to identify representatives of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), civil society and Native Administration drawn from all five Darfur States, to participate in the peace talks in Juba, South Sudan. In accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2495 (2019), UNAMID is providing logistical support to the Sudan Peace Commission, TGoS, and SRF-Darfur Track, to organize these two major consultative conferences. The two Conferences, held under the theme: “Peace First” took place in El Fasher, North Darfur on 30 January and 1 February to discuss ways of unifying views on issues related to the current situation in Darfur and to prioritize issues to be addressed during the peace talks to bring peace and stability to Darfur. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the IDPs Conference, the Wali

(Governor) of North Darfur, who also represented the Government of Sudan and other Darfur Walis, Major General Malik El Tayeb Khojali, commended the Joint Field Committee and UNAMID for facilitating the two Conferences, stating that this gesture from all concerned parties, will have a positive impact on the ongoing peace talks in Juba. Ms. Najat Suleiman, a representative of the Joint Field Committee, commended the Peace and Development Study Centers in the five Darfur states for their commitment to the consolidation of social peace, praising the great role that the native administration continues to play in society, in terms of conflict resolution and promoting harmony and peaceful coexistence among the local communities. In their remarks, the Directors of the Peace and Development Study Centers in Nyala and El Daein Universities, Drs. Jaafar Ali Fadul and Adum Mohamed, underlined the importance of ending war and conflicts in Darfur for the sake of sustainable peace, stability, development and democracy in the region. They called

on the participants to come up with concrete outcomes that will help the negotiating parties to reach a comprehensive peace agreement that will lead to lasting peace and stability in Sudan. The convening of the consultative conferences for IDPs and Darfur civil society is in line with the Framework of the Protocol signed by the TGoS and SRF-Darfur Track on 23 December 2019 on aspects related to the participation of IDPs, refugees, civil society and native administration in the peace talks in Juba. More than two hundred IDPs participated in the IDPs consultation conference and will in turn nominate 50 representatives (25 men and 25 women) to represent them in the peace talks in Juba. An additional 200 participants from Darfur took part in the native administration and civil society stakeholder’s consultation conference, including farmers and herders. They are also set to nominate 50 representatives (25 Native Administration and 25 society stakeholders) to participate in peace talks, currently underway in Juba, South Sudan. ■

UNAMID hosts horse-race for peace in central Darfur



Zalingei, 14 February; Thousands of people from Zalingei and surrounding villages attended a Horse Racing competition organized by UNAMID Communications and Public Information Section (CPIS) in partnership with Zalingei Horse Racing Union in central Darfur. The event held under the theme: “Together for Peace” and attended by UNAMID Force Commander, Lieutenant-General Leonard Ngondi, Government officials and UNAMID staff, was aimed at promoting peace and peaceful coexistence among feuding local communities in the area. Trophies, medals, prizes and promotional material bearing peace messaging were distributed to the winners and other horse riders who participated in the 6-round horse racing competition. Addressing the gathering, UNAMID Force Commander, General Ngondi, underscored the Mission’s keenness to continue its support to such popular sporting activities as part of its contribution towards achievement of sustainable peace, stability and prosperity within different Darfuri communities. “Sport is universally acknowledged as a valuable tool in settling differences between communities and promot-

ing a spirit of peaceful coexistence. This is nowhere more evident than in today’s event. I have realised in my time in Darfur, and Sudan in general, that horseracing is a celebration of more than 400 years of chivalry and horsemanship. This makes this sport a unique, defining cultural element that can bring communities together rather than divide them,” General Ngondi added. In his remarks, Mr, Jibril Younis, the representative of the Wali (Governor) of central Darfur, commended UNAMID for sponsoring the horse racing competition and noted that the ethnically divergent nature of the gathering reflected the tolerance and peaceful coexistence that now exists in central Darfur. Mr. Younis also pledged the Government of Sudan’s readiness to support the upgrading of the horse racing track, in partnership with local and International organizations. The Chairman of Zalingei Horse Racing Union in central Darfur, Brigadier General, Ali Yagoub, extended his appreciation to UNAMID for its initiative to support the horse racing competitions in central Darfur, noting

the Mission’s efforts in keeping peace and maintaining security in Darfur, in collaboration with the Government of Sudan. “Horse racing competitions are an effective tool in strengthening the social fabric and promoting harmony among the local communities in central Darfur. Our Horse-Racing Union looks forward to further collaboration with UNAMID CPIS as we scale up these confidence building measures through which peace is the ultimate dividend in central Darfur,” Brigadier-General Yagoub further stated. UNAMID, in collaboration with the UN Country Team and various local entities, have launched various sport-based initiatives. Many of these initiatives target local communities and create neutral space for the young and old to participate in events that promote peaceful coexistence, cutting across existing barriers and divisions as the Mission prepares for its imminent exit from Darfur. It is worth mentioning that horse racing is one of the most popular sport in Sudan, and Darfur in particular. It has been practiced in the region for more than 400 years. ■

UNAMID JSR's Remarks at the opening ceremony of the Sudan Peace Talks in Juba, South Sudan.



Juba, South Sudan 10 December 2019; Under the auspices of the Government of South Sudan, the third round of peace negotiations between the Transitional Government of Sudan and the armed movements represented by the Sudan Revolution Front (SRF) and Sudan People Liberation Movements- North of Abdul Aziz Alhilu and Malik Agar were launched in Juba, South Sudan. UNAMID Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief mediator (JSR/JCM), Mr. Jeremiah Mamabolo, Sudanese high-profile delegation led by Lt. General, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, Deputy Head of the Sudan Transitional Sovereignty Council, officials from Government of South Sudan and representatives of diplomatic corps in Juba attended the opening ceremony to the talks. Speaking at the opening session,

JSR/JCM Jeremiah Mamabolo, extended his deep appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of South Sudan for their decision and their courage to take the mantle to facilitate the peace negotiations, adding that the world fully expects all around the negotiating table to demonstrate the requisite leadership, courage and love for Sudan that would result in a positive outcome at the end of this long and cumbersome journey. "We expect this third round of talks will be the last step in the long journey towards the search for peace, stability and sustainable development for Sudan," Mamabolo emphasized. Representatives of the armed movements who also spoke at the opening ceremony, commended the good spirit of the peace negotiations and embraced the resump-

tion of the talks expressing their readiness to continue the talks and their optimism that this round will be decisive especially since the delegation from the Government of Sudan has demonstrated understanding and willingness to cooperate. They urged the regional and international community to continue assisting Sudan to address the challenges facing the transitional period. The African Union and the Arab League representatives affirmed their support to Sudan's peace talks and to Juba as the venue of the peace negotiations. They urged the parties to negotiate an agreement that puts an end to war and achieves the aspirations of the Sudanese people who are yearning for durable peace and stability that will facilitate much needed development in Sudan

UNAMID Welcomes Framework Agreement between Transitional Government and the Darfur Track



Zalingei, 30 December 2019- UNAMID welcomes the framework agreement signed between the Transitional Government of Sudan and the Darfur armed movements (Darfur Track) during the peace talks in Juba, South Sudan, on 28 December 2019. The agreement demonstrates progress in advancing the peace process as it outlines key issues and principles that would guide the ongoing negotiations and serves as a basis for a fair and comprehensive peace agreement. UNAMID's Joint Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator,

Jeremiah Mamabolo, commended the signing of the framework agreement and said, "This is a very positive development confirming the political will and readiness of the parties to reach a comprehensive peace agreement. We congratulate the Transitional Government of Sudan and the Darfur parties on this step and encourage them to continue in the same vein." "UNAMID shall continue to support the peace talks in Juba in line with United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2495 (2019) and within its capability in order to

assist all parties to the negotiation process to achieve the ultimate goal of lasting peace and a prosperous future for all the Sudanese people," Mr. Mamabolo added. UNAMID has provided technical support to all tracks of the Sudanese peace talks in Juba since 10 December 2019. The Mission assumed the role of Secretariat in accordance with UNSCR 2495 which requested UNAMID to provide necessary support to the Transitional Government of Sudan and the armed movements in progressing the peace process.

UNAMID deeply concerned by reports of intercommunal violence in West Darfur



Zalingei, 3 January 2020- The African Union – United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is deeply concerned by reports of intercommunal violence in West Darfur that left 65 people dead and approximately 54 injured, displaced thousands of civilian population, destroyed shelters and burnt villages.

UNAMID condemns the violence and stresses the importance of resolving all disputes in a peaceful and amicable manner and calls on all parties to restrain from the use of force, especially against civilian population, including women and children.

In the wake of these egregious intercommunal clashes, UNAMID is deeply concerned about the loss of life and injuries among civilians, widespread displacement and deterioration of the security and humanitarian situa-

tion in El Geneina and the surrounding area.

While the Mission acknowledges the efforts exerted by the Government to contain the situation, it further calls upon the relevant government authorities to maximize their efforts to establish a protective environment and restore peace and order in and around the greater El Geneina community. It is a matter of priority to engender an environment which is conducive to the resumption of uninterrupted humanitarian operations, given the dire needs of the affected population for basic services.

UNAMID would also like to express its most sincere condolences to the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Sudanese Judiciary, and people of Sudan, for the casualties from the crash of a military aircraft taking off from El Geneina

Airport on 2 January 2020. UNAMID extends its deepest sympathy to the family of the World Food Programme staff member who perished along with his wife and two children in this accident. UNAMID expresses its sincere condolences to everyone who has been affected by the passing of these individuals. May the memories of your loved ones bring you comfort during this difficult time.

Intercommunal clashes in West Darfur erupted on 29 December. Amid security concerns, as part of measures to ensure the safety and security of UN/UNAMID personnel in El Geneina, UNAMID relocated a total of 32 UN and NGO personnel to Zalingei, Central Darfur. All 32 personnel relocated to Zalingei are currently accommodated at the Mission's Headquarters and are in good health. ■

UNAMID organizes a peaceful co-existence workshop for Darfuri Farmers and Nomads in Zalingei, central Darfur



On 16 December, more than 80 farmers, nomads, members of civil society and local journalists attended a one-day workshop organized by UNAMID's Communications and Public Information Section (CPIS), in partnership with the Mission's Governance and Community Stabilization Section.

The workshop, conducted under the theme: "Darfuri Farmers and Nomads Talking Peace", was aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence among the local communities, especially during the current harvest season. During their discussion, the participants appealed for the empowerment of local native administration structures to enable them to play an effective role in mitigating tension between farmers and nomads, the provision of capacity building training for herders and construction of dams and reservoirs for livestock. Participants also urged the Government of Sudan to provide health and education services to the nomadic community and to establish

local markets and veterinary offices. Speaking at the closing ceremony of the workshop, the Secretary General of central Darfur state, Al-Shartai (Native Administrative Leader) Hussein Bakhit, appreciated UNAMID's valuable support to the local crop committees which led to a successful harvest season in Central Darfur. "UNAMID is our partner in peace, development and provision of basic services in Darfur and Sudan in General.

Our transitional Government is focused on achievement of achieve peace in Darfur through the establishment of the local chapter of the Peace Council. I strongly urge farmers and herders to adhere to set government rules and regulations on defined migratory routes to avoid conflict. All participants must take on the responsibility to disseminate the knowledge acquired during this workshop to local communities in all localities of Central Darfur," Mr. Bakhit added.

Representing participants, Dr.

Zainelabdeen Adam, underlined the importance of organizing such workshops for the youth from the farmers and herders' communities, noting that youth are sometimes the main drivers of conflict between the communities. He further recommended the conduct of an awareness campaign for the youth to help fight drugs and address anger issues that ignite some of these conflicts. "I also welcome the participation of women in the workshop as women play a very important role in achieving social peace in affected communities," Mr. Adam added.

Dr. El Nour Musa Bahareldeen, from the Peace and Development Institution at Zalingei University, emphasized the importance of the workshop in achieving peaceful co-existence between the farmers and nomads and called on UNAMID to organize similar workshops in the various localities, especially in the critical areas of Zalingei and Nertiti localities, central Darfur. ■

UNAMID Tanzanian peacekeepers conduct training on cement brick making for IDPs in South Darfur



From 7 to 22 January, more than 140 residents, mostly youth from the Khor Abeche Camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in south Darfur, participated in a UNAMID supported training project on the molding of bricks using sand and cement. This capacity building project, implemented by UNAMID Tanzanian (TANZBATT) peacekeepers based in Khor Abeche, was aimed at imparting masonry skills to the youth in the area who have pledged to build more durable housing for the more than 6700 Khor Abeche IDPs Camp dwellers who currently reside in temporary grass huts that fall short of providing reasonable shelter for local communities, especially during the rain and cold seasons. The project is part of TANZBATT initiatives meant to support local com-

munities to upgrade to a more conducive lifestyle, higher house building skills and to develop additional income-generating options that will make them more independent and become a self-sustained society. The cement brickmaking training was conducted in two phases where the first 1000 bricks were used to construct an Islamic learning school and an additional 3000 bricks sold to the residents to raise capital for similar future projects. In his remarks during the handover of bricks material to the local community, Tanzania Battalion Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Kayage assured the host community of TANZBATT's continued support in skills training and provision of material resources, based on available resources.

"We urge the cement brick making trainees and the local community in general, to fully utilize locally available raw materials in the production of the bricks. There is enough sand here in Khor Abeche as well as water. We are providing you with bags of cement as part of the startup phase of this project, which if managed well, will improve your living conditions and prepare a better future for your children", said Kayage. In response, the Umda (local community leader), Hussein Abubakar, remarked that through this project they expect to construct better houses with better living conditions and for their children to be self-employed instead of them roaming around the streets engaging in less fruitful endeavors.

UN State Liaison Functions concludes training on Gender Based Violence for GoS Police Officers and Social Workers in North Darfur



On 23 January, United Nations State Liaison Functions (SLFs) in North Darfur, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Development of North Darfur, concluded a three-day training programme on Gender Based Violence (GBV), and children's law as outlined in the Sudan Child Act endorsed in 2010, convened for Government of Sudan police officers and social workers in the area. The training programme, attended by 50 participants from various north Darfur localities, was aimed at enhancing the capacity of participants to raise awareness among local communities on the negative impacts of violence against women and children. Addressing participants during the closing ceremony, Ms. Ana Maria De Jesus Morais Valerio from UNAMID's Governance and Community Stabili-

zation Section (GCSS), called on the participants to transmit to others the knowledge they have gained during the training. "Violence against children and women should not be looked at lightly, it should be taken seriously, because it does not affect only the children and women, it affects families and all the society", added Ms. Valerio. In her remarks, the Director of Health and Social Welfare in the Ministry of Health and Social Development in north Darfur, Ms. Intisar Abdel Aziz, commended the efforts made by UNAMID and UNICEF in supporting her institution in the domain of protection of children and women and for convening the training workshop. "Lack of means of transportation for social workers is a huge challenge that hampers the quality of their

work delivery, especially in the localities. We request UNAMID and UNICEF to continue to support the movement of social workers and facilitate their quick response to reported cases and emerging situations within the communities," Ms. Aziz noted. Speaking on behalf of the participants, Mr. Khalid Musa Abdallah, appreciated efforts made by the UN SLFs and the Social Welfare Unit at the State Ministry of Health and Social Development in north Darfur, in organizing this "ground-breaking" training in the area of child and women's protection and urged his fellow participants to apply the experience and knowledge gained during the course into their daily life and for the benefit of their respective communities.

UNAMID Pakistani contingent conducts awareness raising workshop on COVID-19 in north Darfur



18 March; In the backdrop of the outbreak of the Novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, UNAMID's Pakistani peacekeepers conducted a series of workshops on COVID-19 at the Mission's Team Site in Kabkabiya, North Darfur. The workshops were aimed at raising awareness among UNAMID staff and the Kabkabiya local community on the importance of taking precautionary measures, such as the use of face masks, frequent hand washing, use of personal protective equipment and maintenance of good personal hygiene to control the spread of the virus, if and when it occurs in the area.

Two Pakistani health specialists, namely Lt Colonel Noshad and Major Dr. Amna Malik, the Team Site COVID-19 Coordinator Major Dr. Jibran and the Duty Medical Officer, Captain Dr. Kamran conducted the workshops. Pamphlets and posters on COVID-19 and precautionary

measures to be taken to control its spread were also distributed to participants. The participants appreciated the efforts of Pakistani Doctors to valuable knowledge they received during the workshop and expressed their readiness to share the information gained during these workshops with the staff and local community. At the end of workshops, participants were also screened for COVID-19 with infrared thermometer and were found to be negative. Similar workshops will be conducted as part of the community outreach activities to raise awareness amongst local community as well as UNAMID Staff.

UNAMID provides logistical support to consultative conferences on Sudan peace process



In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2495 (2019), which mandated UNAMID to support the peace process, the Mission is providing logistical support to the Peace Commission, Transitional Government of Sudan, and Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) Darfur Track members to enable them to travel to different Darfur states to organize two major consultative conferences for IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), native administration and civil society to facilitate their participation in peace talks currently underway in Juba, South Sudan. The two conferences will be held in El Fasher, north Darfur before the end of January 2020 after conclusion of consultations with various stakeholders by the Joint Field Committee (JFC) comprising the National Peace Commission, the Transitional Government of Sudan and the SRF Darfur Tracks.

Mr. Mustafa Daoud, Head of the Sudan Revolutionary Front Darfur Track team commended UNAMID for its cooperation and role in providing logistical support to the JFC. "UNAMID support enabled us to visit all IDPs camps in Darfur and conduct consultations with their leaders to engage the IDPs in the peace talks, currently underway in Juba, South Sudan", said Mustafa. Mr. Daoud emphasized that the selection of the IDPs representatives will be conducted in a transparent manner by the IDPs themselves with the JFC having a supervisory role in the process. "I urge the IDPs to take the opportunity to reflect their views and issues during the peace talks", added Adam. Ms. Najat Suliman, a member of the JFC, representing the Sudan Revolutionary Front Darfur Track highlighted the important role women

can play in the peace talks and commended the positive representation of women by 50 percent and the participation of disabled persons, youth and elderly persons in the two conferences. "the women participation will help in resolving the root cause of the Darfur conflict", She said. Two hundred participants from IDPs (men and women) will participate in the IDPs consultation conference and they will in turn, nominate 50 representatives (25 men and 25 women) to represent them in the peace talks in Juba. An additional 200 participants will also participate in the native administration and civil society stakeholder's consultation conference, including farmers and herders and they would nominate 50 representatives (25 Native Administration and 25 society stakeholders) to participate in peace talks, currently underway in Juba, South Sudan.



UNAMID Supports Darfur Women Participation in Sudanese (Juba) Peace Talks

By SAID MSONDA

Alaa Salah, a 22-year old student at International University of Khartoum's Faculty of Engineering told a journalist during an interview, following the toppling from power of former Sudanese President, Omar Al Bashir, on 10 April 2019. The student gained world-wide media attention from a picture and video of her chanting against the former regime that went viral and has since been nicknamed the "Woman in White", "Lady Liberty" or "Nubian Queen" of Sudan.

As an active member of the Sudanese women networks that signed the 1 January 2019 declaration on Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), Alaa later informed the United Nations Security Council in New York last October that despite constituting almost 70% of protestors, women have been "side-lined in the formal political process" of creating transitional institutions. She stated that women's representation in the new governance structure was "far below their demand of 50% parity".

"After decades of struggle and all that we risked to peacefully end Bashir's dictatorship—gender inequality is not and will never be acceptable to the women and girls of Sudan. I hope it is equally unacceptable to the members of this chamber," she said amid applause. She also called for judicial accountability and disarmament; and for the political process to be inclusive of women, "civil society, resistance groups, ethnic and religious minorities, those who have

been displaced, and people with disabilities in order to lead to sustainable peace".

The revolution in Sudan started on 19 December, 2018 with street protests across the country mainly due to a hike in the cost of living and continued with persistent civil disobedience until 10 April 2019 when Bashir was ousted and replaced by the Transitional Military Council (TMC) that later evolved into a Transitional Government of Sudan (TGoS).

A largely accepted view was that throughout the demonstrations against the former 30-year regime, women were at the forefront, demanding more freedoms for them-



selves and their country. In September 2019, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir hosted Sudanese peace talks in Juba between Sudanese rebel movements and the Transitional Government of Sudan (TGoS) As an integral part of the Do-ha-based Sudanese Peace Process mandated under the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security; and based on the

last November where about 130 participants agreed to unify their position to push forward issues and Darfur women's agenda in the peace talks in Juba.

Participants in the Forum were from all five Darfur states and Khartoum representing government institutions, political parties, academia, civil society organizations, internally displaced persons' (IDPs), rural women, voluntary returnees, FFC, activists, nomads and movements.

"I'm not afraid of dying We all have to die at some point, so it's better to die defending the cause,"
said the slim neatly dressed young woman.

Political Declaration and the Constitutional Document upon which the TGoS was formed, UNAMID in collaboration with the Sudan's Peace Commission convened in Nyala, South Darfur, a Women Consultative Forum from 25 to 27

Their deliberations revolved around setting up an agenda (position paper) in the areas of peace and security; justice, reconciliation, compensation and reparations; as well as empowerment.

Regarding peace and security, the



participants expressed concerned over the continuing spate of violence including gender based sexual violence and conflict related sexual violence that exacerbates suffering of women and children when venturing out in search of means for livelihood. On justice, reconciliation, compensation and reparations, Darfuri women were concerned with the continuation of human rights violations and the deteriorating humanitarian conditions, for mostly women and children, living under harsh conditions in the IDPs camps. Concerning empowerment, they noted that reasons behind the conflict in Darfur and the obstacles for the achievement of peace was marginalization in power and wealth sharing, especially for women, noting that these critical issues remain unaddressed. The Forum recommended for the TGoS to ratify all regional and international agreements on the rights

of women and establishment of mechanisms for the implementation; involve Darfur women in reviewing and updating the national plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325; integration of gender perspective in justice and military institutions and facilitation of acceptance of girls in police and military colleges and their promotion to higher ranks; reformation of security sector and enhancing the rule of law; reinforcing political will and establishment of mechanisms to follow on implementation of the Constitutional document provisions; engagement of women commission in setting up and follow the implementation of gender justice policies; presentation of racialism as one of the causes of war and integration of the provisions of the peace agreement in the Constitution. This Forum also requested UNAMID to provide technical and logistical support for women to facilitate their contribution in

all stages of the peace process and support the establishment of the provisions of the peace agreement in the constitution. They further agreed to establish a mechanism to coordinate gender issues and the women agenda in the peace process; formation of data base to locate competent Darfur women in all fields and at all levels; formation of a women pressure group for advocacy for peace; establishment of a women initiative to meet with Abdul Wahid Nour to urge him to join the peace process and establishment of a women mechanism to liaise with armed movements to encourage them to unite and to foster trust between them. According to Ms. Halima Yagoub Ahmad Mohamad, UNAMID Gender Affairs Officer, above position was submitted to the Sovereign Council, the Justice and Equality (Armed) Movement delegation, Sudanese Women Union and Canadian Em-



bassy to advocate for their position in the resumption of the peace process in Juba. "The Forum also listed potential women for Legislative Council and leadership positions in different government ranks and institutions," she added. In response to the request from the Women's Forum, UNAMID provided logistical support to a 16-member team Joint Field Committee (JFC), comprised of representatives from the Sudan Peace Commission and Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)-Darfur to organize two Consultative Conferences in El Fasher: one involving IDP representatives, on 30 January 2020 and second conference comprising representatives from native administration, civil society held the following day to address issues related to general peace and security as well as to undertake consultation with stakeholders in Darfur to select their representatives to the Su-

danese Peace Talks in Juba. In addition, UNAMID conducted a workshop for women in Zalingei, Central Darfur from 9 to 11 February 2020 to enable coordinators from all the Darfur states to compile a framework for advocacy and lobby for inclusion of women in the peace process, participation in national politics and nomination of Darfuri women to the Legislative Council and other government positions. Workshop participants were also informed on the process underway to establish a Darfur Women Regional Coalition, a platform for advocacy, lobby and networking at the regional and international level. UNAMID also provided logistical support to women IDPs, civil society and native administration representatives who participated in the Sudanese Peace Talks in Juba, South Sudan from 5 to 8 March 2020. UNAMID will continue to play its facilitation role to ensure that Darfuri

women actively participate in these peace talks to ensure that their positions on issues of serious concern to them are fully taken on board to enable people like Alaa Salah, who were part of the revolution in December 2018, confidently feel that "inclusion of women in the political sphere, judicial accountability and disarmament" among other issues, are finally realized in Sudan. "Women and young people were at the forefront of the recent protests, often outnumbering men and accounting for 70 per cent of protesters while facing extraordinary risks including being subjected to arrest, harassment and rape. Darfuri women have continued to demonstrate their capacity and zeal to drive change towards a positive extreme of a better tomorrow and look towards a meaningful and equal participation of women in peace and political processes," stated George Odongo, UNAMID's Gender Unit Officer in Charge. ■



Interview with UNAMID’s New Director of the Mission’s Support Division, Houston Fergusson.

In United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Mission Support Division (MSD) has, as part its numerous obligations, the responsibility to account for those assets United Nations member states have invested in during the life of the mission. In this interview with Voices of Darfur, UNAMID’s newly appointed Director of Mission Support Division, Mr. Houston Fergusson, gives an insightful look at the work of the Division.

By Musi Khumalo

With a 42 year-old professional career under his belt, Mr. Fergusson has a wealth of experience in supporting complex and multidimensional UN field operations in conflict and post-conflict environments and field operations. In this interview, DMS Fergusson shines a spotlight on the work of the Mission’s Support Division in UNAMID’s transition and drawdown processes.

VoD: This is your second association with UNAMID, what are your impressions of the Mission area this time around?

HF: I am very pleased to be back in the field and back to what was always my favorite Mission. There are a number of impressions that I have seen since my return to the Mission. First, I was very impressed by the infrastructure of the Mission and how it has stood the test of time and all

the conditions, especially the accommodation. As I look around today it is still in pretty good shape. This is a validation of all the hard work that went into building the infrastructure. The other impression I have, is how green the place has become. I remember planting a lot of seedlings when I was here the first time. Now, the place is an oasis of lush green trees and flowers. That always makes it ecstatically pleasing to the eye.

I suppose the greatest change for me is the size and scale of the operation. When I was here those years past, we were spread over five sectors. I recall the construction of the Mission’s headquarters, sector headquarters and team sites in some of Darfur’s remotest places. But now, the operational area has shrunk to a much more concentrated and consolidated area. So, I suppose my biggest observation is the size of the operation compared to the last time I was here.

VoD: Describe the role of the Mission’s Support Division (MSD) which you lead and how its operations are aligned to other Mission components.

HF: Because of the phase of life UNAMID is in presently, the MSD has to balance and compete with a number of partners and requirements. First we have to remember that we still have a mandate that compels us to undertake a number of operational activities such as protection of civilians, support to humanitarian agencies, mediation and the political process. At the same time, I, on behalf of the organization, have to reorient the focus towards transition, pre-closure of the Mission and eventual liquidation which is very different from other missions which are not in this phase of life. We are at a certain point in mission life where we have to look at what next for UNAMID? What next for UN presence in Darfur?

There is a lot of emphasis for Mission Support Division (MSD) to be



accountable for all the investments made in the Mission. MSD has a slightly different role in that we have a number of competing priorities but my first priority will always be to support mission mandated tasks. That remains first and foremost.

VoD: With UNAMID at its draw-down stage, how does MSD intend to handle its asset management in conformity with stipulated UN rules and regulations given the recent looting and vandalization of assets handed over by the UN in places like Nyla and El Geneina?

HF: MSD has a responsibility to remain accountable for those assets our [UN] member states have invested in. Over the years, our member's states have invested a lot of capital in UN owned equipment. The role of MSD in this aspect is to ensure that UN financial and related rules and regulations are observed in terms of how we account for those assets. We also have to bear in mind what those assets will be used for and how will

we dispose or transfer those assets in the best interest of the organization. We can also transfer to other UN peace operations.

There are a number of factors that drive how we support other ongoing peace operations. MSD is currently handling quite a lot of transfers of our good, usable assets to other peacekeeping missions. For instance, we are about to transfer 38 vehicles which are surplus to our requirements. These are going to our colleagues in MINUSCA as part of upcoming elections there. So we are sending assets, primarily those that are still in good order and still have life in them, to other organizational peacekeeping operations.

We also have to look in terms of transition and support- what other infrastructure or assets can support transition and the presence after UNAMID and at the same time look at the UN Country Team and partners and see how we can support their ongoing work.

In terms of trying to reduce the risk

of looting we saw in Nyala and El Geneina, we are currently reviewing our handover policy. In fact, the UN has suspended any handover of team sites and their assets whilst we reconsider how we can best handover these assets without further looting.

VoD: Has the Mission intensified its engagement with local authorities to facilitate/ensure seamless shipping of UN assets given the lengthy goods clearance delays encountered at the formative stage of the Mission?

HF: One of the changes that I have seen since my recent return to Darfur is the cooperation and the willingness of [Sudan] governmental bodies that I deal with to work with the Mission. In fact, on the day of my arrival in Sudan, I paid a courtesy call on the [Sudan] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and met with Ambassador Said, who is the Director in charge of UNAMID operations in the MoFA. Since then, I have held technical meetings with the Ambassador and the various arms of Government that would al-



low us to operate under a freedom of movement arrangement. Those included national intelligence, customs and excise and aviation. My sense is that there is a greater sense of willingness, certainly from my counterparts, to support UNAMID. We have seen some real advances in terms of lead time, for example on the issue of visas. Sudanese visa application constraints used to be a real issue as these prevented us from doing certain operational issues that are part of freedom of movement. We have seen a lot of improvement in the speed and the manner these work visas are currently being approved. That is a very, very good sign. We have also seen increased cooperation, not because of my arrival, but have noted this cooperation from customs and excise department.

My observation is that all these processes and procedures that seemed cumbersome and painful, all seem to be working better now. I would probably also add that there are

positive political changes taking place in the country, including the approach by UNAMID Leadership which has always been cooperative when working with those entities. This is paying off.

VoD: Do you envision encountering any major challenges during the Mission's imminent drawdown/closure from the MSD's perspective and what is the UNAMID's preparedness level to mitigate these challenges?

HF: Well the rainy season will soon be approaching. We are currently enjoying some sunshine, with no single drop of rain since my arrival in Darfur. I know that this will change soon with the onset of rains. Certainly one of the challenges of closing down team sites will be the movement of a lot of equipment across some poor road infrastructure. I firmly believe the rainy season will really test some of our logistic capabilities. The other thing we have to take into consideration is that there are some political dis-

cussions taking place about what will come next after UNAMID. MSD is planning for a number of contingencies at this time. We have to consider what elements of UNAMID structure could be utilized for UNAMID follow-on presence.

In this regard, we cannot start dismantling or closing one camp where there's likelihood that camp can be a future location for the next UN presence. We have to take into account various security factors to make an informed decisions on these operational matters. Such decisions are dictated by the security environment in the area. Mission Support Division is therefore looking at all planned contingencies.

As MSD, we are supporting both political and operational drivers as our job is to explore all possible scenarios and try to place good mitigating measures. MSD planning for the rainy day and all other things in between, continues. That is the role of Mission Support Division, to plan for every eventuality.



Results of the United Nations Peacebuilding Efforts in Darfur through the State Liaison Function (SLFs)- an innovative transition mechanism from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Darfur

By Kone Mouroulaye

The conflict that erupted in Darfur in 2003, impacted various spheres of life for the Darfuran population. Besides the destruction of the social fabric and the livelihoods, most of the existing infrastructure, native administration, private entities and government institutions were not spared from the negative consequences of the long conflict that also caused massive displacement of vulnerable population, who had to abandon their beloved original villages and properties, with only the clothes on their backs.

Above situation necessitated the international community's intervention to assist the people of Sudan and Darfur in particular, to quench the flames of the con-

flict and work towards the attainment of stability and lasting peace through political negotiations that led to the deployment, initially of AMIS (African Union Mission in Sudan) in Darfur in 2004, followed by UNAMID in 2007.

Although a comprehensive peace agreement remains elusive, what is certain is that the UN presence, especially the peacekeeping mission alongside UN Agencies and International Non-Governmental Organization (INGOs), has made significant efforts to address some critical drivers of conflict in Darfur, including assisting some of the major warring parties to come to the negotiating table to pave the way towards stability and sustainable development in the region.

Despite these efforts, UNAMID's imminent exit from Darfur at the end of October 2020, present additional anxieties especially among the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who remain in camps. Demands for protection, and development, including strengthening and reforming the existing public services and institutions, remain high.

The United Nations Security Council resolution 2429 (2018) directed UNAMID to drawdown its operations in Darfur, against benchmarks, by June 2020. The same resolution directed UNAMID to work jointly with the UN country team (UNCT) to support a whole-of-system transition concept with the aim of providing sustainable



UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in East Darfur, handed over on 26 July 2019, a rehabilitated veterinary center in Abu Karinka locality, East Darfur. The veterinary center rehabilitated by UN SLFs in East Darfur, is one of the community related projects aimed at providing basic services and needs to nomadic communities in East Darfur. Photo by Kone Mouroulaye, UNAMID.

solutions to the critical drivers of conflict in four states. Consequently, in January 2019, UNAMID jointly with ten UN agencies, funds, and programs (AFPs) began the implementation of a transition concept, which focuses on programmatic activities known as the state liaison functions (SLFs) aimed at addressing critical drivers of conflict and prevention of a relapse in four Darfur States (North, South, East and West) where UNAMID has withdrawn.

The SLFs projects are around four priority areas: Rule of Law (police, judiciary and corrections); Human Rights; Durable solutions: resilience and livelihoods; and Durable solutions: immediate service delivery for IDPs, returnees and host communities for social cohesion. A total of \$39.5 million has been allocated to date for the SLF and 99 UNAMID staff (civilian and police) are embedded with AFPs to support the implementation of SLF projects.

This is a novel concept within UN peacekeeping as observed by UNAMID's Deputy Joint Special Representative (DJSR), Ms. Anita Kiki. "SLFs are an integral part of UNAMID's exit strategy from Darfur. The concept ensures that UNAMID exits in a responsible manner, ensuring that gains achieved

over the years, are sustained," DJSR Gbeho added.

The SLFs allow the transfer of activities aimed at preventing a relapse into conflict and contribute to stabilization, thereby enabling the Government of Sudan, the AFPs, civil society groups, as well as other international actors to prepare for UNAMID's eventual exit. The collaboration is guided by the principle of national ownership for sustainability of peacebuilding efforts in Darfur.

Mr. Simon Girmaw, UNHCR Protection Officer in Darfur, noted that "SLFs projects are an innovative, key strategic intervention in the area of durable solutions as these allow effective engagement between various UN entities and act as a bridge when moving from humanitarian intervention to development, thereby addressing the root causes of the conflict in Darfur."

The SLFs projects are identified through joint Transitional Government of Sudan (TGoS), UNAMID and UNCT analyst. The projects contribute to peacebuilding and strengthening of social cohesion in community in four Darfur states through, infrastructure development or rehabilitation, capacity building and awareness raising, advocacy as well as monitoring and

reporting. Below is some example of results achieved from the implemented projects so far.

Under the rule of law pillar, construction or renovation of infrastructure in areas identified through joint TGoS, UNAMID and UNCT assessments of potential return areas requiring stabilization initiatives were undertaken to prevent a relapse into conflict. Infrastructure is being provided to facilitate the deployment of additional personnel in the justice chain and improve reporting of all types of crimes. Also, rural courts, prosecution offices and prisons were constructed/rehabilitated all of which contribute to the restoration and extension of state authority in the deep field by establishing presence of rule of law institutions to restore law and order and create conditions for stability and hold to account the criminally culpable. Their re-establishment and presence in the areas of return support the creation of conditions necessary for returns by enhancing the delivery of justice services to the population. In addition, Justice and Confidence Centers were established to provide paralegal support to IDPs and returnees in targeted areas.

A juvenile court has been established in north Darfur. This court receives and processes 800 to 900 cases of different crimes per year including, murder, rape, theft among other crimes.

Maolana Nourain Mohammed Yousif, a Court Judge in north Darfur, also commended efforts of UN SLFs in constructing a Child Court in his state. Judge Yousif noted: "Until 2018, there was no single, stand-alone court structure existing for children and juveniles in our state. The previous small child court operated in a single room within the general court inside the judiciary premises where multiple crimes of adult cases took place. This was not a conducive environment to attend to child cases. Last year, we accomplished a major milestone through the construction of a separate structure for a child court, the only facility of its kind in the whole of north Darfur state."



UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative, (DJSR), Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho, interacts with women participants at a 45-days tailoring training course organized by UNAMID and UNFPA State Liaison Functions (SLFs) in El Geneina, West Darfur on 21 October 2019. The training, attended by 17 women, was aimed at promoting life skills and vocational training for socio-economic empowerment of women and increasing family protection by diversifying skills and livelihood activities. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

Appreciating the efforts of UN through the SLFs, in particular, the construction of the new male prison in El Daein, Lt. Colonel Hashim Omar-El Haj, Director of El Daein prison noted that the prison project in their state will improve and strengthen the living conditions of the inmates as the new buildings will provide a safe, secure and humane prison habitation environment that will enhance reformation, rehabilitation and re-integration into society on discharge. "Congestion will be a thing of the past", Lt. Colonel Omar-El-Haj said.

In terms of capacity building, over 3,500 rural court and district court judges, prosecutors, lawyers, prison officers, paralegals, police officers, and civil society groups were trained to enhance their technical skills and ability to apply rule of law and human rights principles in their work.

In the durable solution pillars (livelihoods and immediate service delivery), the SLFs focused on

strengthening protection and capacity building. State ministries were trained and provided with equipment to produce land title documents for IDPs and members of host communities as part of efforts to secure IDP return and resettlement. State Committees on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) were activated and developed Action Plans to prevent and respond to SGBV.

SLFs supported the Voluntary Return and Resettlement and the Humanitarian Aid Commissions to undertake regular monitoring of IDP camps (e.g. Abu Shouk, Al Salam, Kassab and Zamzam camps) as well to conduct return verification missions. The project rehabilitated one major dam in Dar Salam locality which has enabled over 6,000 returnees, host and nomadic households to have access to water for livestock and agricultural purposes. In addition, one thousand IDPs and returnee households were provided with

conflict-free irrigated land for cultivation in the same locality, thereby reducing conflict and building confidence within the community. In neighboring Kornoi locality, a livelihoods hub has been completed to serve over 2,000 households, including the rehabilitation of four boreholes which now provide easy access to water for the 2,000 in that locality.

Women Protection Networks (WPNs) have been established and their capacities strengthened. The WPNs act as 'first responders' to protection challenges, support SGBV survivors and serve as a bridge between the IDPs and the Sudan Police Force (SPF). Six WPNs were activated in IDP camps in South, West and North Darfur, and five in GJM. To enhance the protective environment, IDPs and host communities benefited from projects including work with SPF such as strengthening community policing, establishing digital control rooms to undertake criminal analy-

sis, and establishing gender desks.

From the north Darfur Police Directorate, Brigadier General Abdul Illah Ali Mohamed, last November, commented at the launch of 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, that the numerous capacity building support they have received from UN SLFs has definitely "improved the quality of service the local police currently deliver to the citizenry in the state."

As part of their support to the livelihoods project, the SLFs delivered production materials for seven associations in EL Neem IDPs camp in El Daein, east Darfur after training 40 members of these associations on feeding and fattening of goats and trading in ground nuts and oils.

In addition to infrastructure development, supporting capacity building and awareness raising is a key area of focus for the human rights pillar. Work in this pillar has also ensured sustained public advocacy and awareness campaigns in the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army/ Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) controlled areas of Jebel Marra. The improved access to SLA/AW controlled areas provided an opportunity for the expansion of SLF activities on monitoring and reporting of human rights violations.

On the whole, it has been observed that, beneficiaries of SLFs activities in Darfur, echo the appreciation for support provided by the UN family in Darfur in the areas of infrastructure development and capacity building which they indicate has contributed immensely to the peacebuilding process and enhancement of their standard of living in these remote areas. Some UN agencies have also indicated that the SLF funds have enabled their engagement in Darfur which may not have been possible without the SLF funds.

As of January 2020, the SLFs have been expanded in the greater Jebel Marra where pockets of active conflict still exist. The proj-



UNAMID police component with the State Liaison Functions (SLFs) organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) for 19 Government of Sudan child protection officers in El Fasher, North Darfur. The training focused on Family and Child Protection; Gender-Based Violence and Child Rights among other topics; and it aimed at strengthening justice institutions in Darfur. Photo by Amin Ismail, UNAMID.



UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs), in partnership with the West Darfur Prosecutor's Office, organized a three-day training workshop for 30 prosecutors and representatives of law enforcement institutions in El Geneina, west Darfur. The training focused on application of human rights standards in the investigations of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) cases. UNAMID photo.

ects are aimed at contributing to the prevention of protection risks/threats, addressing intercommunal and land related conflicts, strengthening capacity of rule of law institutions and monitor and report on human rights violations.

Assuring the people of Darfur that peacebuilding and development efforts will continue post UNAMID, the UNFPA Representative in Sudan, Mr. Massimo Diana during

a joint visit to El Geneina, west Darfur with UNAMID DJSR, Gbeho last October noted that: "UNAMID maybe leaving Darfur at the end of its mandate in the region but UN is here to stay. That is why we are here together, to see how best we can complement, and ensure there is responsible engagement on the part of UN as Sudan works towards long-term peace and sustainable development in the country."



UNAMID Patrols – Building Trust within host communities in Darfur

In accordance with its core mandate of protection of civilians, UNAMID provides daily patrols to assess the situation in the internally displaced camps and villages in its area of its responsibility in the Darfur region. Through these short, medium and long range patrols, UNAMID peacekeepers engage the host community as part of the Mission's confidence building measures.

Some of the patrols are undertaken specifically to provide support, especially to women and girls, during their farming, fire wood and water fetching activities. In addition, UNAMID peacekeepers use these patrols to document security incidents such as fire, criminal acts, gender-based violence, and presence of unexploded ordnance and to mobilize responses to community concerns.



UNAMID peacekeepers interact with local community members during a routine patrol in Siri Sam village, near the Mission's Temporary Operating Base (TOB) in Golo, Central Darfur. As part of its core mandate to protect civilians, the Mission conducts daily patrols in various internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps and villages in its area of responsibility.

Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.





UNAMID integrated team from Golo temporary operating base (TOB) conducted an assessment visit to Manabu area- an area controlled by SLA/AW, Omer Aljazouli faction, approximately 14 kilometers east from Golo TOB, during the first visit ever, UNAMID team met with the armed movement leaders and discussed issues related to protection of civilians, human rights and humanitarian assistance. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.





Painting for peace and love for fine art: An interview with Artist Elfadil Abdurahman:

Thirty-six year old Elfadil Abdurahman, was born in Jebel Marra area in Darfur, Sudan where he started his basic education before moving to Nyala, south Darfur where he undertook his secondary education, ending up in Zalingei University, and central Darfur where he graduated with a degree in Geography. Elfadil currently works as a secondary school teacher in his beloved hometown of Golo in central Darfur.

MOHAMAD ALMAHADY

VoD: How did you get involved with fine art?

Elfadil: Fine art for me started as a hobby. The real motivation for my love of fine art is my upbringing. I was born in Golo, in the Jebel Mar-

ra area of central Darfur where I was surrounded by green pastures, a mountainous environment and amazing waterfalls. I felt the urge to capture this scenery in painting for posterity. My family also encouraged me to follow my passion as an addition to my regular academic studies.

VoD: What is the general focus for your paintings?

Elfadil: Because of the rich natural views in Jebel Marra, I always find myself drawn to drawing and painting natural elements such as

waterfalls, rivers, mountains and green landscapes. This overwhelming natural beauty not only inspires fine artists, but poets, singers and praise singers.

VoD: How is your fine art received in your community, your home town in Golo?

Elfadil: Since my drawings reflect the serene beauty of the Jebel Marra- the most beautiful area in Sudan in my eyes —my paintings have now become an attraction for tourism purposes in my area and is well known by media out-

lets in my area. You know that Golo, especially the parts with the waterfalls and the like, is not yet easily accessible due to poor road infrastructure. Therefore displaying my painting and displaying them at exhibitions, promotes the tourism potential of my area, goes a long way in attracting visitors to at least make their way to Golo to discover the scenic, undiscovered greenery and waterfalls.

I mostly use the green, blue and gray colors I mostly use in my paintings as these are “optimistically



calm” colors that appropriately describes our landscape, our people and the joy that awaits those who visit our communities.

VoD: Do you feel that your paintings contribute to peace in your home area that has seen its fair share of conflict in Darfur?

Elfadil: All my paintings send a strong message to the Darfuri community to come together, live peacefully in a solid harmony. This message could be captured in murals in public areas, streets and even in schools where the message encourages unity and love among the various communities. Peace is our strategic objective and we have to direct all our strengths, hobbies and talents towards the promotion of peace and peaceful coexistence in Darfur.

VoD: What are your future plans

in fine art?

Elfadil: To be honest, I have many plans in mind! Developing my hobby in fine art through incorporating modern technology and painting tools as well as conducting photo exhibitions that showcase nature and life in Darfur in general and Jebel Marra area in particular. These are my priorities. We need to highlight the fact that Jebel Marra is very rich in its delightful, natural views and landscapes, waterfalls and wonderful tropical weather.

VoD: What challenges are you facing as a fine artist in central Darfur?

Elfadil: Lack of materials, equipment and marketing of our products are the main challenges we face in our area. However, a noticeable lack of the general population’s awareness of the value of fine art is truly worrisome and has

caused stagnation in the market for our paintings. In addition, poor road, housing and office infrastructure has hindered movement and advancement of the fine art trade, visits of artists to the area and limited fair competition in field of fine art.

VoD: Do you have any changes you would like to see effected to improve the situation you’re just described?

Elfadil: I appeal to all fellow artists to direct all their artistic efforts toward peace building among Darfur communities. Art can play an essential role in restoring coexistence in Darfur. I look forward to a secure, stable, developed and prosperous Sudan, including our beloved region Darfur not forgetting my beautiful, luscious green Jebel Marra.





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