

UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur

VOICES

of Darfur

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Combating climate change
Reducing greenhouse gas
emissions

Seasonal journey of the Baggara
Nomadic migration during the rainy
season

Henna, the traditional body art
Marriage blessings and generations of
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01 UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR), Ibrahim Gambari, meets in Khartoum with the World Bank Vice President for Africa Obiageli Ezekwesili. Gambari seeks the assistance of the World Bank for development projects in Darfur in order to ensure that the “dividends of peace are made evident” for the promotion of a durable peace in Darfur.



02 An unidentified armed group attacks a busy marketplace in Tabara village, located 32 km southwest of Tawilla, North Darfur, leaving dozens dead and a large number injured. After the incident, hundreds of families from the village flee to Tawilla.



14 The Mission launches the first policewomen’s networking forum in El Fasher, North Darfur. The forum will provide a platform for UNAMID’s female police officers to exchange ideas and experiences to increase the impact of their work in Darfur and to promote better interaction with Government policewomen.

SEPTEMBER AT A GLANCE



20 Nigerian Minister of Defense, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode, visits Darfur where he meets with UNAMID senior leadership and assesses his country’s troop deployment in the region. The minister is welcomed in El Fasher by JSR Gambari, who praises Nigeria’s involvement in peacekeeping operations worldwide, and especially Darfur, where their troops “play a critical role in helping UNAMID accomplish its goal to realize peace.”



20 UNAMID JSR Ibrahim Gambari officially opens the newly-built Nigerian Level II hospital in El Geneina, West Darfur. The facility provides emergency medical care, as well as first aid training and related workshops.



21 On the International Day of Peace and the African Union’s Year of Peace and Security, UNAMID organizes a series of events throughout Darfur, under the theme “Make Peace Happen.” JSR Gambari hosts in El Fasher a program of cultural displays presented by members of several contingents serving with the Mission and children from the state scout organization.



27 The security of civilians in Darfur, as well as access for peacekeepers and aid agencies to those in need, are among the issues discussed during the ninth meeting of the Tripartite Mechanism (United Nations, African Union and the Government of Sudan) on UNAMID, held at UN Headquarters in New York on the sidelines of the annual high-level general debate of the General Assembly.



30 UNAMID organizes a Clean-up and Environmental Awareness Campaign Day in El Fasher. The program also includes tree planting around the Mission’s compounds.



Determined to pick up the pieces

Tawilla's newly displaced population

BY MAYADA UMBADDA & GUIOMAR PAU SOLE

Weeks after the 2 September attack in Tabara village, the people of Tawilla in North Darfur continue to pause whenever they pass by two large mounds of Earth on the edge of town, offering silent prayers for the dozens of victims buried underneath.

Though the effects of the attack are still keenly felt, life is slowly returning to normal in this part of Darfur. After the attack, in which a group of unidentified heavily armed men opened fire in the busy marketplace, over seven hundred households fled to Tawilla, 32 km southwest of Tabara and site of the nearest UNAMID base. To-

day, 150 households are still here, while the remaining members of this small farming community having returned to Tabara, determined to reclaim their livelihoods.

"When we arrived, they gave us humanitarian aid, but we have to go back to our lands," says one farmer. "If you work hard for something, you can't *not* go back. Even if there is nothing left, even if all you can do is sit there."

IDPs reach out

People in Tawilla are no strangers to the harsh consequences of conflict. In 2004, most of the town's population fled to El

Fasher. Now, nearly all of its 50,000 residents are displaced persons from nearby villages, living in four camps.

So when the villagers of Tabara arrived on 3 September, most carrying only what few possessions they could hold on to, they found a community ready to help.

Over one thousand people from Tawilla and its neighbouring villages came to offer their condolences and support. Together they helped bury the dead and construct shelters for the living.

"It happened during Ramadan," recalls



Left. Ashia Suleiman Abbackar, from Farga, with 2 of her 7 children: Fatna and Shadia. Right top. Tawilla New IDP Camp. Right down. Sheik Adam Mohamad Mahmud and other IDPs giving respects to the killed people in Tabara

PHOTOS: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

Adam Mohammed, an elder from Tawilla IDP camp. “We worked till sundown burying the dead.” Equipment from a nearby UNAMID construction site was brought in to assist.

The injured were treated by *Medicins sans Frontier*, one of three aid organisations in Tawilla. They received medical attention, water, and plastic sheeting for temporary shelter.

Several weeks later, most of Tabara’s villagers have returned. The rest, have settled here, finding safety in UNAMID’s constant presence, most of them in “Rwanda”

IDP camp, named by the locals after the nationality of the UNAMID peacekeepers who watch over the town. They stay in small round huts made of carefully arranged branches and plastic sheets, alongside the more durable mudbrick homes of IDPs here since 2005. Thorn bushes are arranged against the huts’ walls to provide some form of protection but most of the shelters have no doors, as there isn’t much to steal.

Most people here are farmers. Each morning, they travel to their lands and tend to their crops and return to the camp before dusk sets in.

Since the attack, UNAMID peacekeepers have increased the number and radius of their patrols to enhance the safety of outlying villages. Aid agencies continue to work to meet the needs of the newly displaced and support those who have returned.

For the people of these communities, each new day is a few steps closer to recovery and to regaining their lives and livelihoods.

Seasonal journey of the Baggara

The nomadic tribe migrates during the rainy season

BY SAEED ABDALLA ADAM



Baggara family at their temporary residence outside of Nyala

Every summer, before the start of the rainy season, the Baggara people migrate from Bahar al-Arab area on the border between South Darfur and South Sudan, near the river of the same name, to northern areas, in search of grazing lands for their cattle. It is not an improvised movement. Before the journey to north starts, young men go on a reconnaissance patrol to locate good pasture fields with ponds of water.

The Baggara are among the oldest nomadic tribes in Darfur and are also found in Sudan's Kordofan region and in other African countries. They are cattle-herders, and precisely their name comes from the Arabic word '*Baggar*,' meaning cattle.

Normally in June, the Baggara leave the green area of Bahar al-Arab, in the rich savanna belt, escaping insects and heavy rains. During the rainy season, their movement in the area is difficult because their routes turn into muddy, narrow lanes as a result of thick bushes and grass, which grow in this period.

The journey is done step by step in large groups. To ensure security, three or four clans of approximately 150 members each move together. Every 10 or 15 kilometers they stop for a break where they erect

makeshift straw mat huts according to the availability of water and grass. For the trip, the Baggara ride horses or camels and use donkeys and oxen for carrying luggage. Those who don't have horses or camels use oxen and the poor ones go on foot.

In the past, before the eruption of the Darfur conflict, they used to venture until they reached the Tabit area, close to El Fasher, North Darfur, but now they stop just around Nyala, some 150 km more south. Here they stay during the rainy months because of the availability of water and grazing land.

The average Baggara tribesman owns more than fifty cows and sheep. However, a wealthy one can own more than a thousand cows, as well as herds of goats or camels. Horses are used for prestige and to lead and corral the caravan. They are also used for racing during celebratory occasions such as weddings.

Every member of the family has a specific role, and only the elders remain behind in Bahar al-Arab all year guarding the farms and chasing animals from damaging crops. Women milk cows, prepare meals, raise kids, market dairy products, build houses, and participate in crop cultiva-

tion. Youth are in charge of festivals, rituals and dances, and take care of the youngest ones while tending to cattle. Children usually look after calves and other animals. They also collect firewood and assist in household chores.

In the dry season, men entertain themselves with '*Dala*,' a game played with sticks, and coordinate activities such as delivering grains to mills and bringing the daily family items from the market.

During their journey, the Baggara establish makeshift shops selling products such as animal fat and ghee, sour milk, '*rabin*,' and decorations made from beads. On their return, they purchase goods such as sugar, tea, millet, sorghum flour, soap, clothes and shoes for the rest of the year.

The migration ends between October and November. Winter is the season when the Baggara tribesmen return to Bahar al-Arab to harvest their crops that they had planted before the rainy season. They will stay there until the rains fall again and the journey begins once more.



Ahmad Yamaia, at the community center in Abuthar IDP camp.

PHOTO: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

“We need to speak with one voice to guarantee our security”

Ahmad Yamaia, Sheik of sheiks in West Darfur and IDP representative in Doha

BY ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

Ahmad Yamaia Suleiman Ahmad is a big man in his community, not just in size, but in status. He is among the most prestigious leaders in the Abu Thar camp for internally displaced people (IDP), located on the outskirts of El Geneina, West Darfur. Mr. Ahmad was born 45 years ago in Nurei, a village 75 kilometers southeast of El Geneina. He is a retired farmer and has two wives and 15 children. He left his hometown in 2003 when armed men overran the village. Like so many, he and his family had to run away.

Now, in Abu Thar, he is a VIP. Well dressed, he is always busy, carrying a scholarly shoulder bag containing important documents. Surrounded by his assistants, he tries to solve the wide-ranging problems of those he serves.

Mr. Ahmad attended the Doha peace talks twice (in 2009 and 2010), representing IDPs in West Darfur. Now, a bit exhausted, he is thinking of returning to Nurei. However, as he explains below in an interview with UNAMID, he is apprehensive as he feels his work remains unfinished.

Why do you feel that your work in the

camp is not done?

In Abu Thar there are more than 14,000 people living in poor conditions. We need to work for our security and to guarantee that we will be able to return our villages.

And what is the solution?

First of all, we need greater unity. In Doha, we should speak with one voice, so that the international community will take notice. We need to identify the same objectives, the same dreams, the same targets. We must not be divided.

What can cause divisions?

In many IDP camps, small arms have started to be distributed amongst people. This represents a big threat for those who want to take the path to peace.

How important are the armed groups in taking part in the peace process?

We need to talk to them and to convince them that their voice must be heard in the negotiations. Without them, our security cannot be guaranteed. Personally,

I requested to fly to Paris to meet Abdel Wahid, the chairman of the SLA-AW. And, we should do the same with JEM's leader, Dr. Khalil Ibrahim.

Do you think that the referendum in South Sudan will affect the peace process in Darfur?

Yes, indeed. There are a lot of people from South Sudan displaced in Darfur. But also, with independence or not, the self-determination of the South will affect the economy of the whole Sudan.

Has UNAMID's presence made a difference in your community?

UNAMID has very good intentions. I remember the last visit of the Force Commander in Abu Thar, when he assured us that the Mission's peacekeepers would do everything to guarantee our security. However, UNAMID must do more to ensure our safety. Without UNAMID, we are vulnerable. And we are still too vulnerable!

Henna, the traditional body art

This old tradition, passed on from generation to generation, is seen as a blessing before entering marriage

BY SHARON LUKUNKA



Tata, in her house, puts henna on a bride's friend before the wedding.

PHOTOS: OLIVIER CHASSOT

Since the beginning of time, people have been finding ways to improve, change or vary their appearance for cultural and personal reasons. These methods of beautifying oneself are just as diverse as they are natural. One of them is the art of henna.

Henna comes from a reddish-brown dye made from the powdered leaves of a tropical shrub used especially to color the hair or skin. It is said that the tree can live up to 10 years and is found in hot temperate regions, such as the equatorial regions of Africa, along the Mediterranean Sea basin, and in other countries including India and China.

Married Sudanese women are renowned for their ornate henna drawings on their hands and feet. This is a sign of beauty. Women normally apply henna during festivals such as *Eids* (religious holidays), weddings, child birth, and before leaving for long journeys. It is viewed as a sacred ritual among older women who attend

the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca).

A henna party is often called two days before a wedding, bringing together the bride and her female relatives and friends. The bride is glamorously decorated with henna and new attire. In the past, the old-

tion to generation. "The bride has to apply henna on her hands and feet as ornamentation, such a practice is seen as a blessing before entering marriage," she says.

Some skilled women have made henna painting their profession. Fatima Bahit, known as Tata, is one of the most famous henna specialists in El Fasher. Self-taught, with more than 15 years of experience, she frequently goes to Khartoum and even to Dubai to provide her services for weddings or *Eid* celebrations.

Many brides, as well as their closest friends and relatives, go to Tata's house before the wedding to get painted. Usually, the bride gets the most elaborate design. Without any template, using a cone full of henna, Tata draws very detailed patterns on her customer's legs (from toes to knees) and hands.

Fatima Adam is among the many women living in Abu Shouk internally displaced persons camp on the outskirts of El Fasher. On the eve of *Eid-Al-Fitr* celebration in El Fasher, she spends the day applying henna to women in her community. Apart from preparing henna and cooking huge meals for the family, women also purchase something new for their households and in time for the celebration.

“Sudanese women apply henna during festivals such as *Eids*, weddings, child birth, and before leaving for long journeys”

er women would paint henna during the party, but today most henna parties only provide entertainment. The groom also applies henna to his fingertips during a separate party.

Fatima Khalil, a resident of El Fasher, North Darfur, says the tradition of applying henna to the skin was passed on from genera-

In today's society, henna is also popular among non-Muslim women, not only to decorate their hands, but also used as a natural dye to color their hair.

One could compare the craft to tattoo art. However, the henna is no permanent, lasting only for two to three weeks at a time. The result is an ever changing style. ■





Combating climate change

UNAMID, local authorities implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

BY RICHARD OYOO

Climate change has been blamed for many things lately: drought in many parts of Africa, including Darfur; extensive flooding that has caused drastic damage and loss of life in Pakistan; and, extreme temperatures rising beyond 50°C.

Climate change is likely to have wide-ranging and mostly adverse impact on human health, with significant loss of life. With an increase in heat waves, more people will suffer from heatstroke, heart attacks and other ailments. Hot conditions could also cause smoke particles and noxious gases to linger in the air and accelerate chemical reactions that generate other pollutants. This contributes to an increased risk of respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and asthma.

The problem caused by increased quantities of gases such as carbon dioxide in the air is called the greenhouse effect. To explain further, greenhouse gases form a layer that traps the radiation emitted from the Earth surface, resulting in a rise in the Earth's temperature. This leads to global warming, and this in effect drives climate change.

In Darfur, some of the climate change effects are the long drought as well as heavy rainfall in some parts of the region,

leading to local flooding. Further, there is also the emission of different greenhouse gases. Carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide are released into the atmosphere through burning of solid waste, wood products and fossil fuels. One of the primary uses of wood is for firing bricks. Fossil fuels are consumed in vehicles, airplanes and generators. Methane emissions come from livestock and other agricultural practices

and through the decaying of solid organic waste in municipal solid waste dump sites. The wide use of air conditioners and refrigerators as a result of high temperatures emits hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride into the air.

To reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions in Darfur, UNAMID is working to improve solid waste management through the segregation of organic fraction for compost production. Rwandan and Nepalese troops are lending a hand by segregating kitchen wastes from

general solid wastes, and subsequently composting them. This process converts organic wastes by bacteria to produce manure, which can be used as fertilizer to boost up crop production. The Mission is also reducing the consumption of burnt bricks by replacing them with concrete bricks for construction, and planting trees to store the carbon dioxide absorbed from the atmosphere as a result of photosynthesis.

UNAMID in collaboration with Darfur's Agricultural Research Centre has rehabilitated a tree seedling production with annual production capacity of 50,000, and developed four tree seedling production centres Mission-wide. Moreover, four sanitary landfills have been designed with methane trapping facilities to be constructed to

“Climate change causes long drought as well as heavy rainfall in some parts of the region”

treat solid wastes. Lastly, plans have been developed for the non-fossil based fuel such as solar and wind energy for heating water, lighting security light and powering motorized boreholes.

The participation of all, including local authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, UNAMID and the population is vital in raising awareness of the impact of greenhouses gas emissions to the environment and society.

Left. dried land near Shangil Tubaya (North Darfur).

Down. UNAMID's staff plant trees in El Fasher.

PHOTOS: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN



Investing in safe child delivery

Midwives' training contributes to reducing harmful practices

BY SHARON LUKUNKA



Midwives in Saudi hospital take care of two newborn babies.

PHOTOS: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

To ensure safe childbirth, most mothers rely on the assistance of midwives, who are professionals and qualified to deliver babies and to care for the mother during pregnancy. However, this type of care is often not available to those in remote areas. Instead, many women in Darfur turn to traditional birth attendants. This route brings with it many risks, as the assistants often do not have the required supplies and drugs to perform their tasks and instead apply traditional means, even if they are prohibited.

With the help of the international community and local NGOs, basic maternal and child health services have been established in Darfur. Training is provided to local midwives to teach them how to reduce deaths during childbirth, deliver healthy babies and improve infant care.

The El Fasher Women's Hospital, known by the locals as Saudi hospital, employs several midwives working in the facility. Among them are Fatima Abdalla Make, who has worked at the centre for seven years; Raga Ahmed Mohamed, who has been a midwife for 18 years; and Magda Abdulseed, who has seven years of experience.

The practitioners work tirelessly, as the hospital receives more than 20 women on any given day. However, they are faced with some challenges. These include a lack of equipment and lack of women's awareness of basic care: for example expectant mothers do not usually visit the doctors for regular consultations and end up arriving late on the day of delivery. "We are constantly encouraging mothers to seek medical care early to ensure safe childbirth and avoid the risk of losing their baby," says Fatima Abdalla Make. "It is our job to help avoid traditional practices some of which may harm the mother and the baby," adds Magda.

About 68 women graduate from El Fasher Midwifery Institute every year and the organization is in the process of opening a second school to prepare more females as midwives. Hawa Osman Ishag has been teaching at the institution, which was opened in 1956, for 29 years enlightening women on childbirth. "The education program continues to be seen as a success story," she says.

Every year, groups of women between the ages of 18 and 30 years enroll for the one year course at the school. These women

are nominated through the *Sheikhs* and *Umdas* (local community leaders) in every area of Darfur. Selected candidates from each village not only receive training in basic hygiene, infant care, immunization and nutrition, they also learn how to effectively present these messages to their communities. At the end of their studies, the participants are provided with a medical kit to use in their future job.

Main towns in Darfur have at least one clinic serving the inhabitants of the area. With the assistance of UN Agencies and NGOs, many of these centers have been rehabilitated and receive instruction for the staff. The goal of this initiative is to significantly reduce maternal and infant mortality in areas that have previously had no trained reproductive health-care providers.

Midwives play an important role in society as they discourage traditional birthing practices in favor of approaches that lead to healthier babies.





Promoting women's rights

UN Women, the creation of a gender entity

BY LUCY MATHIESON

On 14 September 2010, the UN Secretary-General announced the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, as the head of UN Women,* the newly created UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, established on 2 July 2010, by General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/64/289 and A/RES/63/311. Eagerly anticipated and due to begin work on 1 January 2011, UN Women is aimed at promoting gender issues within the wider UN system, including the potential to assist effective integration of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) within UN peace-keeping missions.

UN Women was created through the merging of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

The entity raises hopes for increased abil-

ity to emphasize women's issues and establishes a precedent for fulfilling the promotion and protection of human rights. It is part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. However, in order to effectively conduct its work, UN Women must place an emphasis on gender mainstreaming and budget allocation to be able to do so.

Gender mainstreaming is an instrument for achieving gender-policy goals. Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

Beyond resource related questions, the

creation of UN Women marks significant affirmation of the need to empower women and thereby give priority to the fulfillment of all women's rights. It is a matter of democratic justice that there be more women in power throughout the world.

Nevertheless, to the outsider, this exercise may appear as yet another form of obtuse bureaucratic reshuffling. However, many remain hopeful that it could lead to tangible improvements in the lives of women around the world, translating into global progress on gender-specific issues, like the Millennium Development Goals. The new UN body is meant to bridge the gap between what UN member states say are priorities for gender equality and the UN secretariat's ability to deliver. At the ground level, it is also anticipated that UN Women's creation will result in significant improvement in the provision of technical assistance to help developing countries improve women's access to health care, education, and economic opportunities, in addition to promoting human rights in a more holistic manner. The requirement



Women celebrate the International Women's Day on 8 March 2010 in El Fasher.

PHOTOS: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

to address these issues is heightened in conflict and security contexts – with challenges around the implementation of 1325, and 1820, revealing the need for a strong gender entity.

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the recognition of the important and ben-

mented in organizations that are politically involved in the broadest sense – ministries, public authorities, local administrative units, associations, societies and trade unions, as well as education centers. In addition, in order to ensure women's concerns are addressed within peace-keeping missions, gender-main-

of reckoning for 1325 - being both the 10-year anniversary of the resolution and the year of the long-awaited creation of UN Women. As UNAMID embarks on defining its strategy for the integration of UNSCR 1325 into its work in Darfur, it welcomes the establishment of UN Women. In doing so, UNAMID recognizes the priority of the women and security agenda, to ensure women's participation in peace talks and in all conflict resolution efforts. After all, if there is a failure to gender-mainstream, disregarding not just women's roles as leaders and peace-builders, but women's roles in early recovery, long-term stability and the viability of durable solutions will inevitably be undermined.

**Detailed information on UN Women can be accessed at:*

<http://www.unwomen.org/about-un-women/>

“It is a matter of democratic justice that there be more women in power throughout the world”

official role that women play in building sustainable peace has steadily increased. Numerous policymakers and practitioners within the UN and other multi-lateral organizations are publicly acknowledging the value of women in leadership roles. However, frustration remains with the slow pace of progress both inside and outside the system.

Gender mainstreaming must be imple-

streaming must take place within Missions. It requires a different approach to building security, peace and stabilization. There is a need to include women in peace negotiations not simply as participants, but also as mediators, negotiators, observers and experts, and in the implementation of peace deals.

And, it is from this perspective that the year 2010 provides an important moment



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