

VOICES OF DARFUR

July 2010



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The re-awakening of a village

Keeping culture alive

Making bricks, a community affair

Profiling Darfur's women leaders



Foreword

Dear readers,

Voices of Darfur is UNAMID's monthly publication designed to present the everyday lives of the people of Darfur.

In our first issue, and in those to follow, we focus on those who are working to make a difference to better their community.

For many of us, Africa is our home. We may speak different languages, come from different parts of the continent or worship in different ways, but our values and expectations are the same. We want the best for our children and our people, for the children and the people of Darfur and Sudan, and we know that with peace and stability come opportunity and the prospect of a better life. Those are aspirations worth our commitment and efforts.

On behalf of Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari, UNAMID looks forward to bringing the voices of Darfur's citizens a bit closer to you.

Good reading,

Kemal Saïki
Director, Communications & Public Information Division (CPID)
O-i-C OJSR/Substantive Pillar

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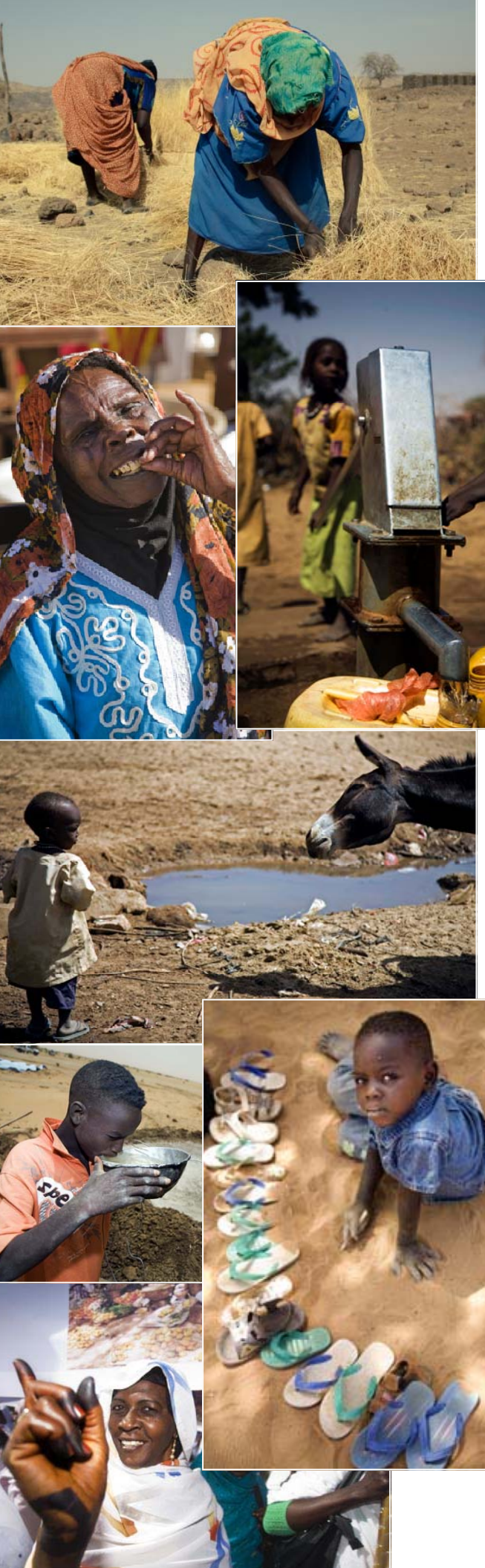
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Front cover: Albert Gonzalez Farran

Back cover: Olivier Chassot



2010 Timeline

22 January

Professor Ibrahim Gambari, formerly Under-Secretary-General and



Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the Iraq, formally assumes his duties as UNAMID's new Joint Special Representative (JSR).

16 February

UNAMID receives five Mi-35P tactical helicopters from the Ethiopian



government. The long-awaited helicopters enhance the Mission's ability to protect the civilian population and will enable a swift and effective response to any developing emergency on the ground.

23 February

The Government of the Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) sign the Darfur Framework Ceasefire Agreement in Doha, Qatar.

5 March

A UNAMID patrol of 63 peacekeepers and 10 vehicles is ambushed by armed gunmen claiming to be with the Sudan Liberation-Abdulwahid faction (SLA-AW), while on a special assessment mission to the Jebel Marra region of South Darfur.

7 March

Two peacekeepers who had evaded the ambush return safely to base with the help of a member of the local community.

11 April



Four South African peacekeepers, two men and two women, are abducted in Nyala, South Darfur. Voting begins in Sudan's first multi-party elections in 24 years.

26 April

The four peacekeepers are safely released, after 16 days in captivity.



Omer Al-Bashir is announced the winner of the presidential race.

7 May



Two Egyptian military peacekeepers killed and three injured in ambush near Edd al Fursan, South Darfur.

20 May

JSR Ibrahim Gambari briefs the UN Security Council on the situation in Darfur noting that "results have been mixed despite our best efforts." The UNAMID Chief reports progress and setbacks in the protection of civilians and in the peace process.

30 May

UNAMID marks the eighth annual International Day of UN Peacekeepers,



which honors those who have fallen and those who continue to serve in the cause of peace.

3 June

Four UNAMID peacekeepers, who were abducted on 11 April, and released after 16 days in captivity, return to Darfur to continue their mission.

21 June

Three Rwandan peacekeepers are killed and one seriously injured when gunmen attack a teamsite in Nertiti, West



Darfur. UNAMID has lost 27 peacekeepers to hostile action since beginning operations in January 2008. The Mission's Force Commander visited the teamsite the day after the attack.



UNAMID conducts regular nightly patrols to the Abu Shouk IDP camp, located on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur.

PROTECTING CIVILIANS: UNAMID's top priority

As early as 0700 hours, the first patrol team travelling in a convoy of eight to 10 vehicles accompanied by an armored personnel carrier leaves a UNAMID base where they travel for approximately 10 kilometers to the nearest camp in El Fasher. Patrols are one of the responsibilities of the police and military in providing security to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps and to villages throughout the region.

The Abu Shouk camp, located on the outskirts of El Fasher town, North Darfur's capital, is home to about 75,000, with the nearby Al Salaam camp counting approximately 60,000 residents. In addition to a free health clinic, the inhabitants receive food, water and sanitation services from humanitarian groups working in the area. The camp is also equipped with hand pumps that supply water to the community.

Life in Darfur's IDP camps is anything but easy, yet all seems commonplace to those living there—kids play, while adults go about their daily chores. As a UNAMID patrol composed of police advisers and accompanied by the Indonesian formed police units (FPUs) drive by, children and elders stop to welcome them.

While in the camp, the team meets with various stakeholders including community safety committees and Sudanese police to discuss security issues and hold meetings with women's groups on gender issues.

As part of their capacity building, patrol teams also conduct basic English language classes for IDPs and Sudanese Police officials, sensitization programs on prevailing health related issues and fire, alcohol brewing and hygiene. They also provide instruction on basic and community policing, human

rights and gender training courses for the Sudanese police and volunteers.

UNAMID community policing centers also engage the local population in recreational activities, including football matches for community policing volunteers, as well as the Sudanese police.

The protection of civilians in Darfur is a highly complicated and demanding task, due to the geographical size of the area of responsibility, the dispersion of authority and influence through various formal and informal power centers, and the logistical limitations of the Mission.

In a typical day, more than 200 patrols are conducted throughout Darfur, with many of these being in and around IDP camps. The measures have undoubtedly created a safer environment as UNAMID works to carry out its responsibility to protect civilians. ■

*Story: Sharon Lukunka
Photo: Olivier Chassot*

Providing security and protection to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) for more than one and half year, Indonesia's Formed Police Unit (FPU) have been a very capable and integral part of UNAMID's mandated-task of protecting the people of Darfur.

The Indonesian Unit, consisting of 140 personnel, including two doctors and four nurses, arrived in El-Fasher, North Darfur, in October 2008.

Before coming to Darfur, the peace-keepers received special physical training on high-risk operations and protection of people in immediate danger. The unit officers also passed an array of tests, including a psychological exam to determine their moral readiness and awareness for what they would be faced with once deployed.

Accompanying the units' journey to Darfur were 17 patrol vehicles, six anti-mine armored cars, eight armor personnel carriers (APCs), one recovery truck, three water trucks, and three ambulances.

When they first went into an IDP camp they were not welcomed. *"During our first patrols, the IDPs threw stones at us. They were afraid, not knowing that we came to protect them,"* Indonesian Captain Ahmed Maktal recalled with a smile during an informal gathering with UNAMID staff.

Solid trust would be earned. In one case, it was the swift action by the FPU to come to the aid of a pregnant woman who required medical care. An Indonesian police ambulance arrived in minutes. *"With the help of our nurse, we took her to the hospital, but the Government military stopped us at the gate. We were not allowed to go out of the camp before 6:30 in the morning... we told them it was urgent... we had to go through intensive talks with them before they allowed us to move on to the hospital,"* said the Captain.

The FPU provides daily protection to Abu Shouk, Al-Salam and Zam Zam, three large IDP camps near El Fasher. The unit also escorts convoys of UN personnel and police advisers.

An agreement of cooperation was recently concluded between UNAMID and Sudanese military forces to allow UN ambulances and patrols to carry IDPs in need of urgent care, without delay, to hospitals.

The Indonesian FPU also organizes humanitarian assistance. They have organized donations of gifts to the IDP Camp in the area of Zam Zam, Abu Shouk and Al Salam. They also manage sporting activities and initiated a 10 kilometer "Fun Run" in August 2009 during their Independence Day celebrations.

The Indonesian UNAMID Police contingent continues to build trust in communities it serves and is widely respected and appreciated by their colleagues. ■

Story: Ala Mayyahi
Photo: Olivier Chassot



A UNAMID Indonesian FPU member greets the local community outside of Zalingei, West Darfur.

Nyala's youth debate future

As part of its continuing efforts to reach out to all strata of the Darfur region, UNAMID in collaboration with the Centre for Peace and Development Studies has organized a series of debates that bring together academics, researchers, representatives of the civil society and government officials.

One such debate, held on 18 May at Nyala University in South Darfur, deliberated on the theme, "Should the role of civil society in peace be increased or reduced?"

More than 400 students participated in the discussion on the role of the civil society in achieving peace in Darfur.

The session largely focussed on two 3-person teams representing a pro and con points of view with the audience asking questions.

Speaking to the participants, Mr. Hassan Yusuf, UNAMID's South Darfur Acting Head-of-Office, said that the search for sustainable peace and security in Darfur and the Sudan was a collective responsibility for both individuals and groups, adding that "the University, as a resource center, is in this regard considered a critical stakeholder in the search for durable peace and development."

The debate was broadcast live on three of Darfur's four radio stations and was also covered by Sudan's Al Shurouq TV Channel and Radio Afia Darfur, based in Washington, D.C. The event marked the second in the series organized by UNAMID.

The first was held at El Fasher University under the theme, "The Role of education in the peace process"; a third debate is currently in the works for El Geneina, West Darfur. ■

Story and Photo: Kone Mouroulaye



Nyala students deliver questions and comments to a debate team of their peers.



Hawa and Nafysa weave brightly coloured baskets.

Keeping D

Fatima, Hawa and Nafysa sit close to one another in a rickety booth in Al-Mawashi market, exhibiting their colorful artistic hand-made crafts. They are among the many in this market of El-Fasher city, North Darfur, who make crafts with a high degree of skill. This is not a hobby for the three sisters, it is how they survive.

On a recent visit to the market with colleagues, I got a chance to speak with some of the vendors, to learn more about their work and to try and capture a bit of their life story.

Al-Mawashi market

Women selling side-by-side with men

A visitor can easily feel the authentic atmosphere of Al-Mawashi market, with its long narrow alleys and the small booths lined up on each side filled with different kinds of hand-



baskets ("Mandolas") unique to Darfur.

Darfur heritage alive

made crafts. It is among the oldest markets in the city and used to be exclusively for selling cattle, as its name, the "Livestock Market," indicates in Arabic. One can't help but notice the many saleswomen, clearly exhibiting the role women play in supporting their families side-by-side with men.

After making a small purchase and engaging in a bit of friendly conversation, Hawa began to open up to me as she decorated a basket with beads.

Hawa, can you tell me about your family?

I am a single mother of 10 children. My husband disappeared five years ago when armed men attacked our village.

Can you please tell me a bit about your work?

It's fine, but it was better some years ago when we were all living in the vil-

lage. Now, the situation is very difficult, people nowadays don't spend money on buying these items. On a good day I might make eight to 10 pounds (about \$3 USD); on a bad day I'll go home empty handed.

Would you like to return to your village to settle?

Of course, however the entire village was burned down five years ago. All the people left fearing for their safety.

How is it living in El-Fasher?

The security here is good, it wasn't so safe when we first came, but now it's better.

In another alley, Ismael Ahmed makes leather shoes, lining up the finished pairs in front of his shop. He talked about his craft.

I make the shoes of goat and cow leather. I buy it from a tanning fac-

tory. I make some shoes by sewing and others by gluing. I sell them to walk-in buyers and if a wholesale merchant wants to buy a large quantity I sell to him too.

How many pairs do you make a day?

When I glue them, I can make five. When I sew, I can produce three. The goat leather ones sell for 20 pounds (\$7 USD). I make shoes of snake leather too, selling them for 100 pounds (\$38). Business is fine, thank God, I make on average 15 pounds (\$7 USD).

Al-Buroush market Rugs for shade

To the northern side of the city is Al-buroush market. Al-buroush, the plural of the word "Bersh" in Arabic, is a typical local type of rug, made of strands of palm fronds.

Darfuris have always used these rugs. They serve not only as a place to sit on, but also for creating shade by hanging them horizontally atop four upright pillars. In recent years, the rugs have been used in the manufacturing of ready-made construction boards, an item in high demand.

Al-buroush rugs are made in villages such as Dumma, Al-Jurf and Al-Minwashi, South Darfur. The villagers depend on selling them in bulk to merchants who in turn bring them to retail shops in the cities.

Although the markets are usually crowded and busy, the majority of Darfuris can hardly afford the prices of basic commodities as they struggle to make a living standards.

UNAMID intends to play an effective role in economic and social recovery, through several development projects which will be conducted in coordination with UN agencies and other partners. It is hoped that these projects will create job opportunities for the people of Darfur and provide them with livelihoods and a better standard of living.

Story: Ala Mayyahi
Photo: Chris Cysmanick

Making bricks, a community affair

In support of the local economy and also their own livelihood, inhabitants of the internally displaced persons (IDP) camp of Abu Shouk and Al Salaam have engaged in what may seem to be the fastest growing industry in the region: brick production. The area close to region two camps is filled with massive holes the size of a soccer field, bearing witness to the importance of the informal brick-making economy that seems to be thriving in the area.

Although water is a scarce commodity in the arid region around El Fasher, and because it is free for the camp inhabitants, a substantial informal water economy sprung up in and around the camps. A large amount of water is used in the manufacturing of bricks, as well as firewood which is used to fire the bricks.

Brick making has become increasingly common-place and one of the few live-



lihoods available to the people at the camp. About 30 percent of internally displaced people work at the site to make bricks by hand that will be used for building shelters in Abu Shouk camp.

Women and girls in the camp begin their work at about 0700 hours each day, digging and shaving soil, collecting water from the one-hand pump available at the site, to begin making bricks. They work tirelessly the whole day. During school break, children help their mothers in the field as well. Buy-

ers begin to arrive at the site after 1000 hours to purchase a thousand bricks for 100 Sudanese Pounds (40 USD); in turn the 'karro' (a horse carriage used to carry goods) provides transportation for a 100 Sudanese Pounds fee.

Since 2004, the inhabitants, particularly the women groups of the area, have been devoted to manufacturing bricks which are produced on a small scale within their homesteads as their main source of income. The bricks are also sold to builders around El Fasher town and many of Abu Shouk's dwellings are surrounded by a low brick wall to provide some shelter and privacy to the neighbourhood.

While the bricks produced at Abu Shouk might be small, the impact they have on improving the livelihood of those in the community is anything but that. ■

Story: Sharon Lukunka

Photos: Olivier Chassot & Nektarios Markogiannis



Brick-making in Abu Shouk IDP camp.



Most brick makers in Abu Shouk are women of all ages. They start their day at 7:30, going to the pits at the edge of the camp in order to make mud bricks. They come well prepared, bringing tools and water. The few young men working in the pits are a rare sight.



One standard room in the camp is usually 2m x 3m, requiring 1,000 bricks. A woman can make an average of 100 bricks a day. These mud bricks are an environmentally friendly alternative to the more common red bricks, which need to be fired. However they are not as durable.





Halima Adam Harif and her son, Mohammed, in their shop in Seraf Jedad. Below: a collapsed shop in the market.

The re-awakening of a village

The sun begins to rise and 14-year old Zeinab is on her way to open her family's small shop in Seraf Jedad, West Daruf. It is one of only six businesses the community has nowadays. The small grocery pales in comparison to the large market that once stood before the conflict erupted in Darfur, consuming the village with it.

An hour later, Halima Adam arrives to open her shop, located just a few meters from Zeinab's. Her baby, Mohammed, sits on her lap. While Halima tends to her work and parenting, her husband works the land. "We don't make enough money selling things in the market to survive," she admits. There is not a hint of despair in her voice, only hope.

Though the Seraf Jedad market is only open twice a week on Mondays and Fridays, it represents a rebirth of the village located seven kilometers from the Chadian border. As a result of fierce fighting in 2008, the inhabitants fled, becoming internally displaced people in the Armankul, Tindelti and El Geneina

areas. One year later, in April 2009, they started to return to Saraf Jedad.

No more than 1,000 households (approximately 4,000 people) are now settled in the village, ready to reclaim their lives. But it is not easy. Many returned to ruins and must start anew. After rebuilding the school and tiny clinic, after improving the security situation of the village (the national police patrol the area everyday) and after developing the main resources (water, firewood, agriculture...), the leader of the community, the Sheikh of Sheikhs, Zelik Kheir Daud, is hopeful that business will return. And the market is where it begins.

The market, where it is possible to even deal in Chadian currency, is growing step by step. The families, like Zeinab's and Halima's, have invested their own money to rebuild their old shops and others are now under reconstruction. UNAMID and other international partners are cur-

rently working on ways to assist in redeveloping the market and, in doing so, helping the community return to life. ■

Story & Photos: Albert Gonzalez Farran



High-tech blocks make quick impact

Working to build confidence between the local population and the Mission, the provision of basic social service needs through the implementation of UNAMID Quick Impact Project (QIPs) was expanded in numbers and geographical coverage.

As of June 2010, UNAMID QIPs recorded a total of 444 projects approved and at various stages of implementation covering education, water, sanitation, health, agriculture, environment, women empowerment, shelter and income generation.

The implementing partners of QIPs are local Non-Governmental and civil society organizations, particularly Parent Teachers Associations. In the short to medium term, the objective is to advance the national recovery process, provide support to the functioning of rule of law, assist local authorities and civil society and create short-term employment opportunities in vulnerable communities.

Recent QIPs have focused on encouraging people to build using more sustainable forms of resources.



Most notably this has been the shift from fired bricks to the introduction of Stabilized Soil Blocks (SSB).

The special blocks do not require the burning of wood and are therefore more environmentally friendly. Furthermore, SSB technology is aimed at curbing environmental degradation and desertification through the cutting down of trees for the production of fired bricks.

Four schools, one office building and a community center in North Darfur are among the most recent SSB initiatives undertaken.

While these blocks may seem common-place to many people outside the region, to the people of Darfur, they represent a new opportunity for people to learn about the benefits of conserving natural resources.

The Quick Impact Projects programme is designed to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment needed to build confidence with IDPs and the general population. These projects strengthen cooperation between civil society and the NGOs, and bring about tangible benefits to a population that expects to see peace dividends. ■

*Story: UNAMID Civil Affairs
Photos: Albert Gonzalez Farran*



New structures begin to take form with more environmentally friendly building blocks.



HAVING THEIR SAY

Open Day on UNSCR 1325 brings women's concerns to forefront

In recognition of the upcoming 10th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, UNAMID on 7 June sponsored "Open Day" in El Fasher, North Darfur.

The event was the culmination of a series of four consultations held in May in Darfur's three states as a means of facilitating dialogue on women's issues, peace and security, between women peace groups and the UN.

Attending Open Day were more than 40 participants representing women's groups, youth, internally displaced persons and nomads, as well members of the North Darfur State Government's Committee on UNSCR 1325 and women representatives and signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement.

On behalf of Joint Special Representative (JSR) Ibrahim Gambari, Ms. Yegerawork Angagaw, Head of the Mission's Gender Advisory Unit, took part in a two-hour dialogue and exchange of views with the women. "In Darfur we endeavored to reach out to our sisters in government and those affiliated with armed movements, because they are important advocates for

change within the parties to the conflict," she said. "Together, we will bring the voice of these women to the highest level of the UN, its member states and partners who can support us."

Among the topics of primary discussion were increasing the representation of women at the decision-making level, protecting women in conflict and ending impunity for war crimes against women, including sexual violence. These items are at the heart of the landmark Resolution which ensures that the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality form a central part of efforts to implement peacekeeping mandates.

"Open Day" on 1325 was one of many held in countries with UN peacekeeping and political missions throughout the period of 7 to 11 June. The forum was intended to channel women's concerns directly to UN leadership. The recommendations from the participants will be directly communicated to the UN Security Council to inform the Council's deliberation on the Resolution scheduled for October 2010.

The UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), in partnership with UNDP, UNIFEM and UNAMID, hosted a similar "Open Day" event on 10 June in Khartoum. ■

Story: Chris Cycmanick

Photo: Albert Gonzalez Farran



A discussion group during a debate on 1325 at the University of El Fasher.

Profiling



Magda Ali Hassan

Lawyer

A lawyer by profession, with over five years of experience in criminal law and legal aid, Ms. Hassan Ali is also a member of the Sudanese women development organization as well as the State Committee Combating Gender-based Violence. She has been a member of the South Darfur Committee on 1325 for one year and refers to the Resolution as a springboard to solving women's issues and leading to empowerment.

The State Committee includes women representatives from civil society organizations and internally displaced persons (IDPs), who are actively involved in issues of gender-based violence in South Darfur.

Currently, the state has 18 percent of women representation in legislative Assembly and two positions headed by women, including the Minister for women and children and the Wali's (Governor) Advisor for women and children. ■

Darfur's women leaders

Hawa Suliman

*North Darfur Minister of Agriculture/
Head of Gender Violence Committee*

Ms. Hawa Suliman was recently named State Minister of Agriculture and, before her appointment, served as the General-Director of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 2006, she was appointed by the Wali as Chairperson of the gender-based violence state committee in North Darfur, which she still chairs.

The Committee focuses on advocating the empowerment of women and promoting gender equality in the state as stated in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).

Since the adoption of the Resolution, Darfur women have been able to assist women's groups in nominating prosecutors in six localities in North Darfur, as well as advocate for women to be in decision-making positions. In 2006, North Darfur had only one woman Advisor, in 2009 the state had one Advisor and one Commissioner, both women.

In 2010, the state has three positions headed by women, one Advisor, and one Commissioner and in June 2010, Ms. Hawa Suliman was appointed as Minister of Agriculture. In her new post, she intends to advocate for more women leaders.

Currently, women comprise 27 percent of the national parliament.

Ms. Suliman is working to include more women in the ongoing Doha



peace talks between the Government of Sudan and Darfur's armed movements.

The Committee recently held a workshop for women groups to discuss ways and issues of how to be a part of the peace negotiations.

The Committee has also trained women for investigation positions in police stations, and social workers operating in different localities in North Darfur, including El Fasher.

The North Darfur Committee includes representatives from UN agencies, international and local NGOs in North Darfur.

Mrs. Suliman holds a degree in veterinarian medicine and is married. She is from El Fasher, North Darfur. ■

Fardous Hussein Salih

Wali's Advisor on Women's and Children's Affairs



Ms. Fardous Hussein Salih is an advocate for women and children in West Darfur and is the current Advisor for women and children. She came to understand and

know about United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2001. Upon establishment of the Committee in May 2010, women groups hold meetings to discuss the Resolution and how it can be used to support women and children.

The Committee provides support for women and children issues; conducts trainings and seminars used to discuss the challenges affecting these groups in the state and exchanges views on how to tackle them including promoting education and social welfare for children, especially orphans and disadvantaged families.

Ms. Hussein Salel says, she hopes "to advocate for more women representation in West Darfur," currently there are only a few positions held by women in the region which are those of Minister of Health, Wali's Advisor for Women and Children, and Commissioner for Development and Rehabilitation. The Committee seeks to support women and better understand the laws, how to deal with women's issues, as well as learn more on how to empower them in the state. ■

*Story: Sharon Lukunka
Photos: Albert Gonzalez Farran*



UNAMID police officer talk to local leaders concerning the arrival of new



The Police Co Road

With an area equivalent to the size of France, high temperatures and heavy flooding during the rainy season, Darfur is not an easy place to provide humanitarian assistance. In the Spring of 2010, UNAMID's former Police Commissioner, Mr. Micheal Fryer (South Africa), led a road trip through Darfur, from El Fasher to Zalingei, covering more than 500km. The purpose of the trip was to spend as much time as possible with the local population to better evaluate their situation and needs and to present UNAMID's work and mandate. In addition to the security escort, provided by the Indone-



Police Commissioner Fryer speaks with local elders.



Left: 6 One of the many stops during the long-range patrol. Meeting with the villagers along the route builds trust.





Setting a security perimeter. Safety for both UNAMID and the local population.

Commissioner's Trip

sian FPU, the convoy was composed of different substantive sections of the Mission, including gender, human rights, political affairs and public information officers. Despite the important coordination required between UNAMID, armed groups and the Government of the Sudan, despite the security and logistics constraints, Commissioner Fryer led the road trip smoothly and was able to enhance relations with the local population.

Following this road trip, further missions will be conducted to meet the needs expressed by the Darfuris. ■

Story and Photos: Olivier Chassot



Repeatedly changing tires, one of many challenges on a long-range



Above: Time for a rest.

Right: Darfur's children cheer as UNAMID's long-range patrol passes through their village.

Left: Some snacks and a big smile make you new friends.



