

VOICES

of Darfur

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Documenting Darfuri Music:

Interview with Artist
Alfadil Khatir

**“For Sustainable Peace We
Need to Institute Sustainable
Measures And Policies”: An
Interview With Mike Dzakuma**

**Unamid Supports Displaced
Women by Introducing Fuel-
Efficient Stoves**

**Protection of Civilians: An
Account of Unamid’s
Daily Patrols**



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HYBRID OPERATION IN DARFUR (UNAMID)

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF NOTE

I'M PLEASED to introduce our latest issue of *Voices of Darfur*, 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. In the viewpoint titled "Protection of Civilians: An Account of UNAMID's Daily Patrols" the author, Salah Mohammed, talks about the concept of the "responsibility to protect", which is continuously evolving to achieve its maximum potential as part of UNAMID's core mandate in Darfur and how this concept is embodied through the daily patrols the Mission's peacekeepers conduct across the region. The article "UNAMID Supports Displaced Women by Introducing Fuel-efficient Stoves" highlights the provision of fuel-efficient stoves by UNAMID's Police Women's Network among the female population in the camps for the displaced and how that has gone a long

way in providing them with a sense of security and purpose. The collection of photographs titled "UNAMID Mediation Efforts in Inter-communal Disputes" portrays the Mission's mediation efforts to help various local groups solve their disputes peacefully, including workshops on social peace that have been conducted in line with the UNAMID core mandate of mediation. Finally, in our cover feature, "Documenting Darfuri Music", *Voices of Darfur* presents an interview with Darfuri artist, Alfadil Khatir, where he speaks of his project of documenting the local music, the role of the traditional songs in society and the dissemination of the culture of peace in Darfur. As *Voices of Darfur* continues to evolve as a news magazine, we welcome your feedback. Send your comments by email, to "Letters to the Editor / *Voices of Darfur*" in the subject line and send the email to unamid-publicinformation@un.org

Carlos Araujo
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Alfadil Khatir, a renowned Darfuri musician and lecturer at the University of El Fasher is pictured at the Sultan Ali Dinar Museum in El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Mohamed Almahady, UNAMID.



On 27 October 2016, UNAMID and the UN Country Team celebrated the United Nations Day in Khartoum. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

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UNAMID Joint Special Representative Visits Central Darfur

ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR), Martin Uhomoibhi, visited Zalingei, Central Darfur, where he met the Wali (Governor), Shartai Jaafar Ishaq, and requested access for all UN entities to Jebel Marra, particularly to the three localities of South, Central and North to facilitate the assessment missions, humanitarian aid and protection of civilians in those areas.

Mr. Uhomoibhi praised the state government efforts in mediating and resolving inter-communal conflicts and to

improve security and combatting crime in the region. He encouraged the Wali to extend such efforts to all nine localities in the state.

On his part, the Wali stated that the recent conflict in Jebel Marra, has caused few displacement of the local population. He noted that the government exerted efforts in this area in regard to digging wells, repairing hand pumps, building new hospitals and rehabilitating education facilities. Mr. Ishaq reiterated his government's coop-

eration with UNAMID to facilitate the implementation of its mandate.

During his two-day trip, Mr. Uhomoibhi, accompanied by the Mission's Force Commander, Lieutenant General Frank Kamanzi, also visited Nertiti locality where he held meetings with the locality commissioner, Abdulkareem Hussein Haroun, and members of the Security Committee. The JSR reiterated at the meeting UNAMID's continued support to the peace efforts in all states of Darfur.

On 21 September 2016, UNAMID Joint Special Representative, Martin Uhomoibhi, was received at his arrival in Zalingei, Central Darfur, by the Mission's senior officials. During his two-day visit to the region, Mr. Uhomoibhi met the Wali and requested access to Jebel Marra for all UN entities. The JSR also visited Nertiti where he held meetings with the local authorities. Photo by Mohammed Idriss, UNAMID.



On 30 August 2016, UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative-Political, Jeremiah Mamabolo, met with the Wali of West Darfur, Fadul El-Haja, to discuss issues related to greater coordination and cooperation between the Mission and state authorities in support of ongoing peace processes in the area. Photo by Muntasir Sharafadin, UNAMID.

UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative-Political Concludes a Two-day Visit to West Darfur

ON 31 AUGUST 2016, UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (DJSR-Political), Jeremiah Kingsley Mamabolo, concluded his two-day visit to Sector West, where he met state and community leaders and participated in a retreat organized by the Mission's Human Rights Section.

Upon his arrival in El Geneina, Mr. Mamabolo paid a courtesy call on the Wali (Governor) of West Darfur, Mr. Fadul El-Mula El-Hija, where the Wali commended UNAMID for its contin-

ued support to achievement of peace and security in the state. "We ask UNAMID to continue its support to the local government as it strives for peace and social cohesion within its community. This work requires concerted efforts from both parties and can be achieved also through the provision of more services to IDPs," the Wali explained.

In his response, DJSR Mamabolo affirmed UNAMID continued support to its core mandate of protection of civilians in Darfur. "We commend

the existing good relations between UNAMID, local government and traditional leaders, which go a long way in assisting the Mission to fulfil its mandate in Sector West. We sincerely hope that this high level of cooperation will continue with the new state leadership. UNAMID will continue to provide support to joint programs. We urge the new leadership to make every effort to ensure that the peace conference scheduled to be held in the state, becomes a reality, as this will

go a long way in achieving sustainable peace in West Darfur. UNAMID also commends the great strides made by the state towards achieving the existent level of stability in the region, through intervening in community conflict and mitigating inter-communal violence," DJSR Mamabolo added.

As part of his visit, Mr. Mamabolo also interacted with the Deputy Sultan of Dar Massaleet, Prince Assad Abdu-rrahman Bahreldin, who briefed him on native administrative issues. Mr. Bahreldin expressed his appreciation for UNAMID's support to the native administration and the peace process. The Deputy Sultan explained the issue of traditional settlement regarding 'murder cases' (Diat) amongst tribes,

and the local norms observed when resolving such issues. In this regard, DJSR Mamabolo expressed his appreciation for the role played by traditional leaders in the mitigation of conflicts and in the protection of crops, activities that UNAMID encourages and supports as part of its mandate.

Addressing the opening of the three-day Human Rights Strategic Planning Retreat at the UNAMID Sector West Headquarters on 30 August, DJSR Mamabolo underscored the fact that collaborating with other stakeholders is key to fostering better understanding of the Human Rights Section's mandate, as this will indeed maximize prospects of receiving support for its activities and optimize the

impact of its work.

"At this juncture, I would like to reiterate that the critical role of the Human Rights Section in Darfur, cannot be stressed enough. Your work in terms of human rights monitoring, documenting, reporting, advocacy, institution and capacity-building work is integral to fulfilling the Mission's overall substantive work, whether it is in the peace process, protection of civilians, humanitarian responses or in our recovery and reconstruction initiatives" Mr. Mamabolo said.

In her remarks, UNAMID Chief Human Rights Section, Ms. Isha Dyfan, indicated that the retreat was aimed at reviewing the Section's work plan in light of the new United Nations Security Council's mandate. "Through this retreat, we want to look at and see if our mission or vision which we created is still relevant in terms of changing circumstances that have taken place. It is a planning process, it is a team building process, and we hope to work with our partners within and outside the Mission, so that we will be able to convey our objectives and the outcomes that we wish for the people of Darfur", Ms. Dyfan concluded.

The DJSR also interacted with UNAMID SW Substantive Team Leaders in the presence of the UNAMID Officer-in-Charge of its Office in Sector West, Mr. Rommel Dela Rosa and discussed mandate implementation issues.

The DJSR have also met with Mahada and Awlad Janoub tribal leaders and discussed their role in solving inter-communal conflicts in the area.

The tribal leaders expressed their willingness to resolve disputes amicably, in support of stability in the area. During this meeting, Mr. Mamabolo stressed UNAMID's commitment to do all it can to strengthen social cohesion and support the peace process in the state.

UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative-Protection Visits El Daein, East Darfur



UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative -Protection, Bintou Kieta, interacting with South Sudanese refugees and displaced Darfuris at Khor Omer camp, East Darfur. The meeting took place during DJSR Keita's familiarization tour of the Mission's sectors from 17-20 August 2016. Photo by Abdurashheed Yakubu, UNAMID.

UNAMID DEPUTY JOINT Special Representative (DJSR)-Protection, Bintou Keita visited El Daein, East Darfur, from 17-20 August 2016, as part of her familiarization tour of the Mission's Sectors. During her visit, Ms. Keita met with government officials, native administration leaders, women's groups, internally displaced persons and refugees from South Sudan gathered at the Khor Omer camp as well as UNAMID staff.

Additionally, DJSR Keita paid a courtesy call on the Deputy Wali, Brigadier-General Mohammed Beirag; during the meeting both parties discussed issues related to protection of civilians; logistic support for the state within the Mission's mandate; and concerns regarding early recovery, development and capacity-building initiatives for East Darfur.

On his part, Deputy Wali Mohammed Beirag explained the importance of the role played by the native administra-

tion and women's groups in strengthening peace and curbing the recurrence of conflicts among local communities. Mr. Beirag requested UNAMID's support in investigating crimes and maintaining rule of law through providing a series of capacity-building trainings which, he said, would strengthen the skills of the state police in serving the community.

The DJSR also met with the Nazir of the Rezeigat and expressed commiserations on behalf of the Mission upon the death of the former Nazir, Saeed Madibo.

During her visit, DJSR Keita held a meeting with the State Committee on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The committee members spoke about the pivotal role of women in advocating for peace in Darfur. "Many women who spoke to me said they feel isolated from other similar movements outside Sudan and have requested UNAMID to facilitate other

women's association and leaders from across the world to come to El Daein in order to share their knowledge on challenges and leadership," explained DJSR Keita upon the conclusion of this meeting.

Furthermore, Ms. Keita met with the leadership of Khor Omer camp for the displaced as well as South Sudanese refugees from South Sudan who arrived in the camp following the outbreak of conflict in their country. Some of the issues discussed at these meetings included the planned relocation of the refugees to Kariyo, approximately 30 kilometers south of El Daein; the availability of basic services such as education and water in the camp; the proximity of the camp's residents to livelihood activities; and the possible construction of income-generating training centers for South Sudanese women refugees. ■

Peaceful Co-existence Conference in El Fasher, North Darfur



On 21 September 2016, UNAMID, in collaboration with the Centre for Peace and Development Studies and Human Rights, held a one-day conference on peace and peaceful co-existence under the theme "No life without peace", at El Fasher University, North Darfur. The event was part of the International Day of Peace celebrations that also included a photo exhibition and a musical concert. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016, UNAMID, in collaboration with the Centre for Peace and Development Studies and Human Rights, University of El Fasher, held a one-day conference on peace and peaceful co-existence under the theme "No life without Peace". The event, which took place at El Fasher University, is part of the International Day of Peace ceremonies, which included a Darfuri village, traditional dances, drama performance promoting peace, musical concert and photo exhibition on the Mission's key activities across Darfur.

Hundreds of people such as University students, government officials, native administration leaders, imams, women and youth groups, attended the conference, in addition to UNAMID leadership and staff.

Addressing the attendees, UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative- Political, Jeremiah Mamabolo, read out the UN Secretary-General message of the Day, noting that the sustainable development is essential for lasting peace. "On this Inter-

national day of peace, express your commitment to peace by becoming a champion of the sustainable development goals," he said. "Let us all work together to help people achieve dignity and equality, to build a greener planet, and to make sure that no one is left behind," he added.

In his remarks, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Hamza Abass, who represented the Wali (Governor) of North Darfur, stated that achieving peace is priority for the Government of Sudan, particularly in Darfur, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. He highlighted the importance of the ongoing national dialogue to achieve Peace, security, stability and development in all parts of Sudan. "Darfur is internationally known as it have a model of conflict resolution mechanisms, and the mediators "Ajaweed" played an important role in the reconciliation process," stated Mr. Abass. "The government is committed to implement all the recommendations of this conference, which form a roadmap to achieve peace" he added.

The Vice Chancellor of El Fasher University, Professor Osman Abdul-Jabbar, noted that the whole world is urgently in need for peace and commended UNAMID for its continued collaboration with the University to organize different programs related to peace in Darfur. "We at El Fasher University are committed to continue this relationship with UNAMID to be one of the mechanisms for achieving peace in Darfur," says Mr. Abdul-Jabbar.

The Director of the Centre for Peace and Development Studies and Human Rights, Dr. Salih Elnour, noted that the conference will enable the attendees to discuss strategies and plans to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur.

On his part, the Chief Imams in El Fasher, North Darfur, Mohammed Yahya Adam, called upon the non-signatory movements to join peace talks to end the conflict in the region, stressing on the peaceful co-existence as the only way to solve problems in the region. ■

“No Child Soldiers-Protect Darfur” Campaign in Sortony, North Darfur



On 27 August 2016, UNAMID’s Child Protection Unit reached out to the local community in Sortony, North Darfur, to raise awareness on the importance of ending recruitment and use of child soldiers by parties to the ongoing conflict in the region. The event, part of the Mission’s Darfur-wide campaign, also included distribution of school items and vests with related messages. Photo by Salah Mohammed, UNAMID.

ON 27 AUGUST 2016, UNAMID’s Child Protection Unit (CPU) held its Darfur-wide campaign ‘No Child Soldiers-Protect Darfur’, at the Gathering Site for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) who sought refuge around the Mission’s Team Site in Sortony, North Darfur, following clashes between Government of Sudan (GOS) Forces and armed movements in Jebel Marra.

More than 500 people including senior community leaders, women, youth and children attended the event aimed at raising awareness on the need to end recruitment and use of child soldiers by parties to the conflict (armed groups and armed forces) across the region and to prevent use of children as fighters by communities in inter-and-intra ethnic clashes.

Addressing those gathered at the Site, UNAMID Child Protection Officer, Ms. Alma Tafani, stated that child

soldiering is not in the interest of the communities in Darfur and the country as a whole. “It is our responsibility to protect children in the context of the armed conflict through advocacy and dialogue discouraging armed forces and armed movements from associations with children, while at the same time raising the awareness of communities against use of children as fighters in the ethnic clashes. Education as alternative is a key solution to peace and development in this region,” Ms. Tafani added.

Insecurity remains as one of the main concerns for the IDPs living near the Sortony Team Site. “Unless security is provided, we will never return to our villages” emphasized Sheikh Haroun Hassan, one of the IDP representatives. Sheikh Haroun requested UNAMID and other international organizations to help improve the lives of the displaced com-

munity by providing critical social support such as education, health facilities and nutrition.

Deputy Coordinator of the IDPs at the Gathering Site, Mr. Mohammed Bashar Muhajir, strongly urged the local community to send its children to school. “You know that recruiting children under the age of 18 for military purposes, is a crime not only under international law but even in our local tradition. Therefore, I call upon all parties to the conflict in Darfur, to refrain from recruiting children for military purposes,” Mr. Muhajir emphasized. He further requested UNAMID to establish more observation towers at the Gathering Site as additional protection for the IDPs and called for the opening of the road between Kabkabiya and Sortony, North Darfur, to facilitate easy access of commercial goods to their area.

Representing the youth at the Gathering Site, Mr. Abdelmajeed Ali, commended UNAMID CPU initiative meant to protect the children in Darfur and explained that the youth have an important role to play in raising awareness among the local community about the ills of child recruitment for military purposes.

Ms. Suad Mohammed, representative of IDP women at the Gathering Site observed that children and women are particularly vulnerable and in most need for protection, when conducting their daily farming and fire wood collection chores.

Sortony area, where the gathering Site is located, has two primary schools for boys and girls, Mosques and five child friendly spaces in the area where children can drink clean water to avoid contracting infectious diseases.

During the event UNAMID CPU distributed exercise books and vests to the local community with the message: “No Child Soldiers – Protect Darfur”. Additionally, UNAMID Child Protection also conducted training during which Ms Umalhassan Yjoufoun and Ms Tafani sensitized UNAMID military and police personnel in the area about UN’s ‘Zero-Tol-

erance’ policy on sexual relations with minors as part of a campaign launched in June 2016 titled “Protect Children / Support efforts of UNAMID – No sexual relations with minors” referring to persons under the age of 18 years.

UNAMID has, on numerous occasions, engaged in dialogue with parties to the conflict, resulting in the establishment of six Action Plans and issuance of nine Command Orders to end recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as other violations including abduction, killing and sexual abuse of children in Darfur.



On 21 August 2016, members of UNAMID’s Police component donated blood to the maternity unit at the Zalingei Teaching Hospital, central Darfur. Some 15 police personnel participated in the exercise as a humanitarian initiative to help the hospital overcome shortages in their blood bank. Photo by Kone Mouroulaye, UNAMID.

UNAMID Police Donate Blood to Zalingei Teaching Hospital, Central Darfur

ON 21 AUGUST 2016, UNAMID Police in Central Sector donated blood to the Maternity Unit at the Zalingei Teaching Hospital, Central Darfur. The blood donation is an UNAMID Police initiative to support the local community and to save lives, particularly during surgical operations and child birth.

UNAMID Sector Central Police Sector Commander, General Kharel, the first to donate blood at the Hospital during the visit, explained that the blood donation initiative is an integral part of the Mission

Police’s mandate implementation. “We fulfil our protection of civilian mandate in many ways, even through blood donations to the community in this Sector. Blood is critical for emergency or other major health operations. We appeal to the authorities to ensure proper storage of this donated blood to ensure maximum use when needed, especially in the maternity ward,” General Kharel added.

The Medical Director of Zalingei Teaching Hospital, Dr. Musa Hassan Abdallah, extended his appreciation to UN-

AMID Police for this “noble and lifesaving gesture” adding that as medical staff in the hospital, they fully appreciate the critical need for donated blood, stating that “donated blood saves lives.”

Fifteen UNAMID Police, including members of UNAMID Togolese Formed Police Unit (FPU) participated in this blood donation exercise which will help the hospital to address some of the blood shortages and will contribute to the wellbeing of the local community, especially for the vulnerable and elderly.

Supporting Skills Training for Prisoners at Shallah Federal Prison, North Darfur



On 5 October 2016, UNAMID's Rule of Law Section and the State Prisons Administration held a trade certification ceremony marking the conclusion of a two-year vocational training programme in welding and metal works for prisoners at the Shallah Federal Prison, North Darfur. The project, which is part of the Mission's support to prisons administration across Darfur, aims at empowering offenders with livelihood skills for effective community reintegration. Photo by Salah Mohammed, UNAMID.

ON 5 OCTOBER 2016, UNAMID Rule of Law – Prisons Advisory Unit (RoL-PAU) in partnership with North Darfur Prisons Administration and El Fasher Technical School, held a trade certification ceremony at the close of two years vocational training programme in welding and metal works for prisoners at Shallah Federal Prison, North Darfur. The project, which is part of the Mission's support to Darfur prison administration, is geared towards reformation and rehabilitation of inmates through vocational skills training. In turn, this training will empower inmates with livelihood skills that will provide a pathway for effective community reintegration, when released from prison.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Officer-in-Charge of UNAMID Sector

North, Assane MBAYE reiterated the Mission's commitment to building institutional capacity of the prisons system in North Darfur. He appealed to the prison's administration authorities to allow more inmates to participate in the multiple vocational skills training programmes offered at Shallah Prison.

Team Leader of Rule of Law office in North Darfur, John Omondi, stated that this type of vocational training has a direct impact on the prisoners' well-being when they are released and reintegrated in the community. "Through this vocational training, the prisoners will have the capacity to engage in different meaningful economic activities particularly in the informal sector, thereby minimising the risk of the individuals engaging in wrongful

acts," Omondi stated.

Director of State Prisons Administration in North Darfur, Colonel Mutasem Abdul Fattah, explained that the vocational training offered, is part of the reformation programme for inmates aimed at equipping prisoners with critical hand skills in welding and metal work, carpentry and tailoring and leather works.

Lt. Colonel Abdallah Suliman, the Director of Shallah Federal requested the Mission to extend its support to other meaningful projects such as the installation of solar power in prison premises.

The Director of El Fasher Technical School, Mr. Abdallah Zakaria Ageed, pledged to give the inmates technical and hand skills they will need to live a more productive life after release from prison, pointing that this will only be possible if UNAMID provides enough material to facilitate future vocational training programmes for more inmates at Shallah Federal Prison.

A representative of the inmates later extended his appreciation to State Prisons Administration for its support with the vocational training opportunities in Shallah Federal Prison, stating that this good will has encouraged them to pass the trade test examination and offer them a better future.

Shallah Federal Prison is now a certified Testing Centre for trade certificate training for prisoners conducted by the Directorate of Technical Training in the Ministry of Education, North Darfur with support from UNAMID Rule of Law - Prisons Advisory Unit. More than 250 inmates have benefited from this vocational training program in welding and metal works, tailoring, leather work, and outdoor trades such as plumbing and electrical installations. ■

East Darfur Honors UNAMID



On September 2016, UNAMID received acknowledgment from local authorities in East Darfur for its continued support to Darfuri communities, and for its ongoing role in facilitating reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Pictured here is the East Darfur Wali, Anass Omer Mohammad (left) honoring Landing Badjie (centre), Head of Office, UNAMID Sector East. Photo by Hassan Ibrahim Ishag, UNAMID.

ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2016, UNAMID, represented by its Head of Office in El Daein, East Darfur, Landing Badjie, received an appreciation certificate from local state authorities. The Certificate is in recognition of concerted efforts made by the Mission in facilitating reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among the local population and various notable contributions the Mission has given to the State.

The award ceremony, held at the office of the East Darfur Wali (Governor) was attended by representatives of the state leadership, civil so-

ciety organizations, youth and women groups, the native administration, and community leaders of internally displaced persons as well as UNAMID Sector East leadership.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Nazir (leader) of the Rizeigat tribe, Mahmoud Musa Madibo, stated that UNAMID received the honor following its ongoing support to the state, indicating that the Mission office in East Darfur continues to build strong relations and the East Darfur community.

El-Daein Locality Commissioner,

Ali Al-Tahir Sherrif, explained that the relationship between the state authorities in East Darfur and UNAMID is highly commendable, noting that UNAMID is a key partner in contributing to the development of the state.

In his keynote address, the Wali of East Darfur, Annas Umar Mohammed, emphasized that the award is in line with the kind, appreciative culture of the people of Sudan and is a symbol of appreciation for the illustrious work carried out by UNAMID in the state. ■



UNAMID Civil Affairs' acting Head, Mike Dzakuma at his office in the Mission's headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

“For Sustainable Peace We Need to Institute Sustainable Measures and Policies”: An Interview With Mike Dzakuma

UNAMID Civil Affairs' acting Head, Mike Dzakuma, speaks to Voices of Darfur about the root causes of inter-communal conflict, the Mission's new strategy to prevent frequent outbreaks of violence and measurable success indicators for sustainable peace across Darfur

BY SETYO BUDI

IN DARFUR, UNAMID'S Civil Affairs personnel, deployed in all states, work at the social, administrative and subnational political levels to facilitate the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The section supports the Government and the Darfuri population in establishing conditions and structures conducive to achieving peace. In this interview, Mike Dzakuma, acting Head of UNAMID Civil Affairs, speaks in detail about the current landscape in Darfur and the Mission's strategic interventions to address inter-communal violence.

Voices of Darfur: 2016 seems to be quieter in terms of inter-communal conflicts in Darfur as compared to

previous years, especially 2013 when nearly 2,000 people were killed. Is there greater tolerance among Darfuri tribes now?

Dzakuma: Yes and no. Yes in the sense that as long as we have less clashes, less fatalities and less displacements, I think it is safe to say that there is some improvement in the situation across Darfur. However, peace in this volatile region can be quickly shattered. Until we institute measures to address the root causes of communal conflicts in Darfur, peace is superficial. So I'd say it is too early to conclude that Darfur's communities have learned to coexist. We cannot be complacent.

VOD: Could you expand a bit on the root causes of the conflict?

Dzakuma: There are many. At times, as outsiders working here within the umbrella of the UN, it is difficult for us to grasp some of the complexities at play in Darfur. We cannot categorically state that we comprehend every nuance of every ongoing conflict. For this reason, UNAMID depends on information from our national counterparts, from victims of conflict and from local stakeholders. Taking all these varied sources into consideration, most conflicts are due to competition over scarce natural resources. Desertification and depletion of resources in Darfur have led to a sit-



On 15 June 2016 UNAMID's Civil Affairs section conducted a peace campaign in Shangil Tobaya area, North Darfur aiming at mitigating conflict between nomads and farmers during rainy seasons. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

uation where farmers compete with the nomadic communities depleting water resources and pasture lands.

VOD: How does this competition between farmers and pastoralists play out on the ground?

The nomadic communities have designated migratory routes during their seasonal migration. These routes are bordered by farmlands. Often, animals stray onto farmlands and destroy crops. This, in essence, is what triggers clashes between these two groups.

VOD: What other causes for inter-communal conflicts does Civil Affairs deal with?

Dzakuma: In Darfur, UNAMID Civil Affairs also deals with conflicts arising from *hakura* or land titles. The other issue we often face is that of impunity, which is, in my opinion, linked with the lack of state authority across Darfur. Out of 64 localities across this region, only 29 have police stations and 19 have formal courts. In the absence of state institutions to adjudicate or prosecute crimes, perpetrators are not apprehended and lawlessness tend to escalate. The many instances of cattle rustling among different ethnic groups and ensuing violence is well-documented.

“Civil Affairs staff deployed at the team sites serve as the eyes and ears of the Mission.”

Add to this, the proliferation of arms. Darfuri communities, as a whole, are armed. This is also a cultural phenomenon which, at times, perpetuates violence.

In recent times, another emerging issue is that of competition over mineral resources and oil—gold in parts of North Darfur and oil in certain areas of East Darfur

VOD: What has UNAMID done to address inter-communal conflicts?

Dzakuma: UNAMID has many positive interventions in the area of inter-communal conflicts. At this point, I'd like to underscore the fact that our role is purely supportive—we facilitate the Government of Sudan's response to such conflicts. The Government of Sudan is tasked with the primary responsibility of addressing and mitigating any inter-communal conflict.

Having said that, mitigating and preventing inter-communal hostilities and violence is a key aspect of UNAMID's mandate. Civil Affairs is committed to preventing the occurrence of such incidents and supporting the sustainable resolution of the same.

To this end, we support specific reconciliation processes, using our resources across Darfur, and also in Khartoum. We consistently conduct outreach campaigns at the grassroots level through workshops and consultations, which sometimes culminate in peace conferences.

VOD: Can you give our readers some specific examples of such reconciliation processes?

Dzakuma: We facilitated, all the way from the grassroots to the Khartoum level, a reconciliation process between the Ma'alia and the Southern Reizegat in East Darfur, which culminated with the Marawi Peace Conference in February 2015. An agreement was drafted at the Conference, which, unfortunately, was not signed by both parties as they disagreed on the terms and conditions. This is just one example, but there are many such interventions done by UNAMID Civil Affairs.



On 15 June 2016 UNAMID's Civil Affairs section conducted a peace campaign in Shangil Tobaya area, North Darfur aiming at mitigating conflict between nomads and farmers during rainy seasons. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

VOD: Can you tell us a bit about the early warning mechanism used by Civil Affairs?

Dzakuma: Early warning and prevention of conflicts by virtue of our presence across Darfur as a Mission constitute an integral aspect of Civil Affairs' scope of work here. The widespread reach of UNAMID's police, military and civilian components, at times, serves as a deterrent in a potential conflict. More importantly, Civil Affairs staff deployed at the team sites serve as the eyes and ears of the Mission. Whenever there is any warning of an imminent attack, our staff members flag it and attempt to rally all stakeholders to intervene to ensure it does not escalate into large-scale conflict. We also have committees at

“There is a pressing need for the state to enhance the capacities of existing structures, and to build new structures where there are none.”

the local level that we use to disseminate news and collect information about potential attacks.

Additionally, we organize regular peace campaigns to try and prevent conflict between farmers and herders. The objective of such campaigns is

to build awareness on the benefits of peaceful coexistence among conflicting groups through direct outreach.

Furthermore, we have also conducted a number of capacity-building activities across Darfur. For instance, we engaged two youth groups with a powerful hold over local communities here in Darfur—the *ajeeds* (professional fighters) and their female counterparts, the *bakamat* (praise singers). The *bakamats* traditionally sing songs instigating their men towards battle. We worked with these two groups to embrace peace and use their local influence to rally communities to cease fighting. We provide transportation for them across Darfur when necessary to engage with communities or, in the case of a serious conflict, we request them to intervene actively to stop violence.

VOD: What other projects have you initiated in Darfur?

Dzakuma: Some of our other projects involve addressing the root causes of the conflict I mentioned earlier. We received funding from the Government of Japan which enabled us to rehabilitate natural water catchments across Darfur, called *rihoods*. We have rehabilitated 100 *rihoods* which enable collection and preservation of water during the rainy season for use by both nomadic herders and farmers. We also procured office supplies and equipment which were distributed across all five states in Darfur to the offices of locality commissioners and the native administration. We work closely with the UN Country Team on some development activities.

VOD: What are the main challenges UNAMID Civil Affairs faces?

Dzakuma: I would categorize our challenges into two categories. The first is an ongoing operational challenge. These are mainly related access to local communities. The hostile terrain makes it difficult for us to reach everyone. The other challenges are political—the absence of comprehensive peace agreement in Darfur and the lack of sustained policies, especially with regard to land ownership and also on access to, use and management of natural resources across Darfur. Until these are addressed at the policy level, we don't see the end to the conflict anytime soon. Coupled with this is the issue of capacity among local communities and institutions, which is very weak. There is a pressing need for the state to enhance the capacities of existing structures, and to build new structures where there are none. Moreover, the UN Country Team is not widespread across Darfur; therefore, we tend not to have support in the whole region.

VOD: How does the Government of Sudan feature in all this?

Dzakuma: As I pointed out earlier in the interview, the government has the primary responsibility to address inter-communal conflicts across Darfur. Civil Affairs or UNAMID, for that matter, will not only encourage the authorities but also facilitate as well as support as requested by the host government in prevention, mitigation and reconciliation. All actions we take are upon the invitation from local communities. The Government of Sudan at the state levels has been working actively on this front. For instance, the Walis or governors of the five Darfur states, from July 2015, managed to institute mechanisms in their respective states to address security issues and in turn inter-communal issues. However many of these measures

are ad-hoc. For sustainable peace we need proactive sustainable measures and policies. Conflicts happen everywhere in the world but when they occur, mechanisms are in place to check or address them. Darfur doesn't have these checks and balances yet, that is why we are here as a Mission.

VOD: UNAMID has recently adopted a strategy in addressing inter-communal conflicts in Darfur. Can you tell us more about it?

Dzakuma: The strategy was adopted in June this year and it proposes Civil Affairs to work more closely with state authorities by putting them in the lead to address communal violence. The strategy, per se, is not new as most of these activities have been carried out by the Section in particular and the Mission as a whole. As Civil Affairs personnel, we have conceptualised a way to work with the Walis through formal mechanisms. The role of the Walis is to nominate an institution or individual a conduit between UNAMID and the government.

In terms of the actual implementation, we decided to roll it out, at the state level, involving the government and the UN country team, and other key stakeholders. So once the Walis give us the go ahead, we start implementing appropriate projects or activities.

I'm happy to say that four out of the five Darfur states are actively involved as of now in implementing the strategy. A new Wali was recently appointed in West Darfur and we hope to be able to start working with him shortly.

VOD: Finally, what do you hope to achieve through the new strategy?

Dzakuma: Well, we have set ourselves two benchmarks internally – to reduce fatalities and displacements by reducing clashes and have more peace agreements signed. But then again, the measure of success is not on paper. It is to reinforce the relative peace you spoke of into a sustainable, long-term reality for the people of Darfur. ■



Fuel Efficient Stoves making in Gorof area, South Darfur that implemented by UN-AMID. The project, which is part of the Mission's Quick Impact Projects programme, aims at protecting the environment as well as minimizing possible security risks to displaced women while collecting firewood. Photo by Mubarak Bako, UNAMID.

UNAMID Supports Displaced Women by Introducing Fuel-efficient Stoves

Displaced women across Darfur are most vulnerable to sexual- and gender-based acts of violence as they go about their daily chores. The introduction of fuel-efficient stoves by UNAMID's Police Women's Network among the female population living in the camps for the displaced has gone a long way in providing them with a sense of security and purpose.

BY MOHAMAD ALMAHADY

THE CONFLICT IN DARFUR has left a vast majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees suffering in camps within the region and in neighboring countries. Women and children have borne the brunt of this conflict and are forced to exist in the challenging environment of these IDP camps. This was a lifestyle shift for many who grew up and lived in the rural areas of Darfur, leading what could be deemed as a normal life, notwithstanding the rigors that go with life in remote areas.

Socio-economic conditions in these IDP camps are tough, especially for women who play a pivotal role in organizing the home, tending to children and other related household chores. Adapting to this changed environment requires immense amounts of adjustments, mentally as well as physically. Economically, it was, and still remains, a tremendous strain to live the life of a displaced person where one's basic needs such as food, clean drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, education and

healthcare are not met on a daily basis.

Besides their crucial roles within the family structure, Darfuri women in these camps also contribute to daily external activities—they collect firewood and fetch water in farming and animal breeding. These women are always exposed to risk of being raped, harassed and sometimes kidnapped by armed men when they go out to collect firewood or fetch water.

UNAMID's Police component, in its daily patrols, interacts regularly with IDPs and gathers vital information with regard to the socio-economic and political condition of the people within their area of operation. It is against this backdrop that UNAMID Police Women's Network (UPWN), as part of its activities, decided to pay special attention to the needs of displaced women, starting with the launch of the fuel-efficient stove-making project in early 2015 at Al Salaam IDP Camp, North Darfur.

UPWN has since supported more than 100 women from different localities with these innovative fuel-efficient stoves. The project, to a very large extent, has not only reduced the risk of women being attacked or raped when going to fetch firewood but also serves as an income-generating project as many women are encouraged to sell some of the stoves in the local market.

The materials used in processing these environmentally-friendly stoves include sand, metallic wire and water, which can easily be sourced locally. UNAMID's Water and Environmental Protection (WEP) Unit fully supports this project by providing recycled water, a key ingredient in the manufacture of such stoves.

Shadia Abubakar, Supervisor, Al Salaam Women's Centre, reveals that the women from camps put themselves at risk for sexual harassment



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every time they step out to collect firewood. The risk is even greater for women riding donkeys as often these animals are snatched by unknown armed men; some women are raped and beaten. “The fuel-efficient stoves introduced by UPWN are saving the lives of women in our camp. The use of these stoves has really reduced the risk of women being beaten and raped as they cut down on the number of women leaving the camp to go to the forest collect firewood. This initiative has helped us take care of our families as we sell some of the stoves that we make,” says Shadia.

Amira a 30-year-old internally displaced person, who had fled her home when the conflict started in 2003, fully embraces the concept of using fuel-

efficient stoves in the home. She notes that the project not only limits women’s exposure to the risk of attacks and other forms of violence but also helps some families in income-generation. “This is a tangible project that really supports women in our IDP camp. It is very good and sustainable,” she adds.

From a gender perspective, the Mission’s Gender Advisory Unit says it believes that a roll-out of this kind of initiative in most IDP Camps, could go a long way in ameliorating the gender violence women face on account of the overall security situation in Darfur. “These stoves have significantly reduced women’s vulnerability to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, whenever they step out of secure zones to collect water and fire-

wood. This initiative has now reduced the time women used to spend in the deep field collecting firewood and they now have ample time for other economic activities such as selling food stuff in the market and generating income for household requirements. Additionally, some women make fuel-efficient stoves for sale, thereby improving their standards of living,” says George Odongo, Gender Officer, UNAMID.

The project does not only benefit the internally displaced women who are harassed and violated during fetching firewood, but also contributes to environmental protection through reduction in cutting trees as the fuel efficient stoves are an innovative, scientific method of generating energy. It is also a well-known fact that cutting down of

trees adversely affects the environment through disruption of the carbon emission cycle. In Darfur, trees have an additional ecological benefit of providing shade, food and traditional medication. The use of such stoves also assist in managing waste as the briquettes used in the manufacture of these stoves are made of waste paper.

Abu Bakar Bangaru, Environmental Officer, UNAMID, stated that use of fuel-efficient stoves has more advantages than disadvantages: “The fuel-efficient stoves most certainly assist us in our fight against desertification by helping create a micro-climate to increase the possibility of rain in Darfur.”

Following the successful implementation and the positive responsive by all concerned parties, UPWN, in collabora-

tion with other stakeholders, is working towards increasing focus in this project.

The aspirations of internally displaced women are mainly directed towards their empowerment, towards education, towards their right to actively participate in decision-making and contribute to community development as well as the peace process. A constant craving for their homeland remains a dream that resonates with most Darfuri women living in IDP camps. They hope for long-lasting stability, co-existence and development across this region so as to enable them to restore their former way of life.

The introduction of these fuel efficient stove in the IDP camps, is one way in which UNAMID is consistently contributing to the welfare and security of the women of Darfur.

1 *effective Communication is a tool for peace building. in this regard, UNAMID police officers hold English classes at camps for the displaced and in schools to make interactions easy.*

2 *Fuel Efficient Stoves making in Gorof area, South Dafur, implemented by UNAMID. The project, which is part of the Mission’s Quick Impact Projects programme, aims at protecting the environment as well as minimizing possible security risks to displaced women while collecting firewood. Photo by Mubarak Bako, UNAMID.*

3 *On 3 September 2015, a group of Darfuri women, including representatives from the camps for the displaced, came together to discuss ways in which they can contribute to the peace process in Darfur. The event, which took place in El Fasher, North Darfur, was facilitated by UNAMID’s Community Outreach Unit. Photo by Hamid Abdul-salam, UNAMID.*

Protection of Civilians: An Account of UNAMID's Daily Patrols

Darfur is one of the first situations in which the media and diplomatic communities have invoked the "responsibility to protect" concept, which is continuously evolving to achieve its maximum potential as part of UNAMID's core mandated aims in this region. UNAMID's daily patrols are the embodiment of this concept in the deep field.

BY SALAH MOHAMMED

UNAMID's peacekeepers provide protection to farmers who returned to their areas of origin to cultivate the land in Tawilla, North Darfur, during the recent rainy season. The Mission conducts routine daily patrols across Darfur as part of its core mandate. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.



AS PART OF ITS MANDATE, UNAMID provides 24/7 protection to displaced persons in the vicinity of its Team Sites as well as other, more established camps for the displaced across the region and facilitates delivery of humanitarian assistance from UN agencies. Currently, there are 91 internally displaced persons' (IDPs) camps spread across Darfur; UNAMID Community Policing Centres are co-located within seven of them. The Mission's Military and Police components conduct daily joint patrols within these IDP camps and their peripheries. These patrols

are designed to build confidence; create a protective environment for conducting daily tasks; facilitating delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy; conducting sensitization programmes on livelihood projects; conducting effective security assessments; and verifying on-ground information relevant to the Mission. UNAMID's daily patrols comprise mainly short, medium, long range patrols as well as escorts to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel from the United Nations Country Team (UNCT)

and non-governmental organizations. I recently visited the Tawilla Team Site in North Darfur to get first-hand information on the impact these patrols are having on the local population. Many residents from Tawilla have experienced frequent outbreaks of conflict and have taken refuge in the IDP camps in the area. A day after my arrival at the Team site, I joined the first patrol of the morning which travelled through the Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) clinic in the area to the Rwanda IDP camp and the Dabanera camp before returning to the base. The objective of

the patrol was to sensitize the residents of these camps, especially women and children, about the dangers of Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs). The first stop was at the MSF clinic, the only place for emergency healthcare in the area. I spoke to the Abdulmajeed Ahmed, Project Manager, MSF, who reiterated the urgent need for additional medical services in the area. I also met with a patient, Musa Haroun, a 17-year-old farmer who was attacked by nine armed men, shot in the leg and tied to a tree where he went without food or water for days before he was discovered



- 1 UNAMID peacekeepers prepare to escort World Food Programme trucks in Tawilla, North Darfur. As part of its core mandate, the Mission facilitates the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations across Darfur. Photo by Mohamed Almahady, UNAMID.
- 2 On 6 September 2016, UNAMID peacekeepers during a daily routine patrol in New Rwanda camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Tawilla, North Darfur. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.
- 3 On 6 September 2016, UNAMID peacekeepers conducted a sensitization session on Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) for the people at the new Rwanda camp for internally displaced persons (IDP) in Tawilla, North Darfur. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.



On 6 September 2016, UNAMID peacekeepers interact with some returnees in Kunjara area, near Tawilla, North Darfur, during the rainy season. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

Sudan's acceptance of UNAMID's deployment with a protection role has been one of the most tangible steps toward ending the conflict in Darfur.

by a group of nearby villagers who took him to the Government of Sudan Police. Musa's doctor revealed that he was severely dehydrated when he arrived at the clinic. Such acts of violence among innocent civilians is common in Darfur and it is a reduction of these incidents that UNAMID patrols aim at.

Once we arrived at the Rwanda IDP camp, the Chief Umda, Mohamed Abdallah, made a passionate appeal for shelter and additional medical facilities, while thanking UNAMID's personnel for the protection they provide to the camp. Similar sentiments

were echoed by the residents of the Dabanera camp, once the Mission's personnel completed their UXO sensitization. The Umda of Dabanera, Abd Abdallah, spoke about the good relationship that exists between UNAMID and the Camp's residents, commending the Mission's training of 40 Community Policing Volunteers which according to Umda Abdallah, has led to a marked decrease in violence in and around the camp.

The following day, I, once again, joined UNAMID peacekeepers on an integrated mobile farming and firewood Patrol to Kunjara Village,

near Tawilla, designed to provide protection to farmers who returned to their areas of origin to cultivate their lands during the rainy season. Upon our arrival, we met with a community leader, Sheikh Aldoma Abdallah who informed us that some 600 families had returned to the village during the farming season, following the Tawilla Locality Commissioner's and UNAMID's assurance about their security. Sheikh Adam requested the Mission to double its patrolling activities in the area and urged them to establish a Community Policing Centre (CPC) at the village in order to

protect the farmers and facilitate the voluntary returns of others. "We feel secure in the presence of UNAMID patrols as our village is not yet safe enough for us to farm due to insecurity from unknown armed men," said Sheikh Adam.

I along with the patrol team then proceeded to conduct a detailed tour of the farmlands in the area, sensitize the returnee farmers on the dangers of UXOs and security measures to follow to ensure their own safety, before we returned to the base.

Darfur is one of the first situations in which the media and diplomatic communities have invoked the "responsibility to protect" concept, which is continuously evolving to achieve its maximum potential as part of UNAMID's core mandated aims in this region. UNAMID's daily patrols are the embodiment of this concept in the deep field.

In coordination with the UNCT, UNAMID implements a Protection of Civilians strategy that not only includes assistance to humanitarian intervention, but also includes conflict-prevention, response, justice, recovery and development.

Difficult terrain, adverse geographical conditions and a language barrier are some of the challenges faced by UNAMID peacekeepers in implementing their protection activities, according to Benson Adansi, Security Officer, Tawilla Team Site, not to mention issues of access denial to key areas of ongoing conflicts. "During the rainy season, most areas of operation become inaccessible with thick layers of mud and the rivers and rivulets are flooded. This impedes our movement and trucks that carry food or other humanitarian aid items for the IDPs get stuck in the

mud. It takes time, even days, for the troops to recover these trucks and for them to reach their final destination," reveals Mr. Adansi. The other crucial factor is managing the expectation of the IDPs and their lack of knowledge about the Mission's peacekeeping mandate versus the humanitarian mandate of the UNCT, though every effort is being made by peacekeepers to educate Darfuris regarding the Mission's objectives.

However, the Darfur-wide presence of peacekeepers and the number of daily patrols all over the territory are factors contributing to the gradual reduction of offensives against civilians. Annually, on average, UNAMID's military personnel conduct some 55,601 routine patrols; 45,874 short range patrols; 2,648 long range patrols; 19,263 night patrols; 2,535 humanitarian escorts; and 16,310 logistics and administrative escorts. On its part, the Mission's Police component conducts 75,100 patrols across Darfur. Furthermore, the Government of Sudan's acceptance of UNAMID's protection role, while still being the primary party responsible for the security of civilians has been one of the most tangible steps toward bringing about sustainable peace in this conflict-ridden nation.

While the recovery process in Darfur remains nascent, and there is a strong need to revitalise the economy, support returnees and build up basic infrastructure, at this moment, it is critical that the Government of Sudan, the international humanitarian community and UNAMID continue to work together and recognise their fundamental responsibilities for improving the quality of lives of Darfur's people. ■

UNAMID Mediation Efforts for the Local Communities in Darfur

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2008, UNAMID Civil Affairs Section (CAS), has been exerting a lot of efforts in supporting the mediation between disputed local communities in Darfur. This includes focusing on detecting early warning signs, preventive measures, capacity building and efforts to address the various root causes of inter-communal conflicts, such as ownership of land rights and competition over natural resources.

To support the measures taken to mitigate conflicts between farmers and nomadic herders, UNAMID has conducted 153 dialogue meetings and organized 36 peace campaigns in 2015-2016 for over 12000 participants across Darfur. As a result of these campaigns, more than 6000 seasonal farmers from the internally displaced persons (IDPs) returned to the villages at Korma Locality in North Darfur.

CAS interacts with the local authorities, Native Administrations and other local partners in addressing inter-communal conflicts.





Alfadil Khatir, a renowned Darfuri musician and a lecturer at El Fasher University, is pictured at Sultan ali Dinnar Museum in El Fasher, North Darfur beside an old musical instrument called "Nuhas". Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

Documenting Darfuri Music: Interview with Artist Alfadil Khatir

Darfuri Artist Alfadil Khatir talks about the role of local music in society and the dissemination of the culture of peace across this conflict-ridden region.

BY ALA MAYYAH

BORN IN 1986 in Tarni, North Darfur, Alfadil Khatir, is one of the few Darfuri academicians who conduct research on local music as an art form to create a deeper understanding of the historical development of such arts and their social impact.

Mr. Khatir pursued his primary education in Darfur and then moved to Khartoum where he earned his Bachelor's degree in music in 2012 from the Faculty of Music and Drama of Sudan University for Science and Technology, specializing in the violin. In 2016, he earned a Master of Arts in music where he focused in his thesis on the diversity of beats and songs in Darfur as well as the role of music in social life. Shortly after graduating, Mr. Khatir received an offer to work as a lecturer at the University of El Fasher, where he is currently employed.

Voices of Darfur (VOD) interviewed Mr. Khatir about his project related to documenting Darfuri music, which he has recently started, and the role of local music in society and in propagating the culture of peace.

VOD: Could you tell us about your project on documenting Darfuri music? What drove you to start such a project?

Khatir: The idea of the project came as a result of an in-depth research I conducted for my Master's degree thesis, which required me to dig into all available sources of local music and songs, whether traditional or modern. I noticed that most of these have not been recorded in notes, which is the classical method of documenting music. Rather, they have been composed and circulated only orally. Some of them have been recorded in studios in the form of al-

bums specific to a particular musician or singer. Consequently, there has been no documented Darfuri music that can be used as a reference by those who are interested and that can be preserved as part of the cultural inheritance of Darfur. This situation prompted me to initiate the documentation project in the form of data classifying local music and songs according to type of music and the period of time during which it was circulated. Also, I have collected these songs in the form of digital musical files that I obtained from artists and internet sources, without violating the intellectual property rights of the owners. I have recorded them on CDs, and the project is in progress. I hope when I'm done with it, I would have presented a reliable reference on Darfur's musical legacy, where all the content is set in a scientific and analytical way. And I intend to

make available to all Darfuris who are interested as well as institutions for research purposes.

VOD: Is there any governmental or private body that is supporting your project?

Khatir: No, I haven't received any support for the project from the State or any private institution. Nevertheless, my belief in the importance of this project has motivated me to document this genuine Darfuri art, as the region is known for having different cultures that are rich in numerous arts, including music, which can bring people closer despite their different environments, languages and roots. I believe that all problems can be solved through music if it is correctly used.

VOD: Will you document this musical library later through the internet? For example, establishing a website dedicated for it so as to make it easily available for the public?

Khatir: Yes, I intend to document it on the internet through collaboration with artists whose products will be published on the website. Such a digital platform can attract many visitors from Darfur and Sudan in general, and even from other countries, as the world has become one small village and you can send the subject to all people via the internet. Currently, the lack of financial and technical capacity is hindering the establishment of the website.

VOD: Are new local songs more influenced by western music or traditional music?

Khatir: There is some influence of western music, as it is available on TV channels, internet and social media. This has led the young generation to have less interest in traditional music. Also, due to the security situation, some people in Darfur have forsaken some occasions, where traditional music used to be played.

However, there is also local music, composed of local rhythms, accompanied by traditional and modern musical instruments. There are some artists who excelled in this field and received their share of media coverage, such as Omar Ihsas, Ahmed Sharif, Mubarak Mansour and others. These artists developed Dar-

"I hope peace will prevail across Sudan, in general, and Darfur, in particular, and that we work towards sustainable development and unite for a healthy country free of the scourge of war and racism, so that the doors of peace will open to all Darfuris".

furi music by introducing modern musical instruments, while maintaining the local traditional vocabulary and beats.

VOD: How is the local music in Darfur linked to public and private social events in your opinion?

Khatir: In Darfur, most events are directly linked to music. For instance, events such as festivals and wedding parties are always accompanied by music, songs and traditional dances to bring joy to people. Some official events are accompanied by drum beating. Music is also deeply associated with events such as Nafir (community participation) and hunting as imitation of nature. And in time of battle, there is military music, as well as Hakkamat songs which encourage soldiers in the war fields and so forth. All these events in Darfur are directly associated with music.

VOD: What about Darfuri musicians? Did they learn music and playing academically or are they mostly self-taught through hearing?

Khatir: There are many musicians in Darfur but most of them learned music through their own efforts, as there are no music centres in the region. Additionally, there are traditional instrument players who inherited the profession from their ancestors.

Recently, some young musicians have started learning music outside Darfur in a professional manner. However,

most of them stayed outside due to the lack of musical activities and institutes in the region where they can practice music through playing or teaching. It is worth mentioning that recently a music centre, "Shujoon," has been established in El Fasher. This is a private centre for teaching music academically and may be the only one of its kind in Darfur.

VOD: Are there specific music instruments usually used with traditional songs?

Khatir: Yes of course. For instance, in wedding songs, which are called Dinnariya songs only the Dalluka (type of drum) is used. Also there are keita songs where the keita instrument is used. There is the Nuggara (drum) which often accompanies the traditional dances, the Hazzai songs where the Um Kiki is used and the Nahas (big drum) that accompanies announcements of official ceremonies to the public.

VOD: Are these instruments still in use and how can they be conserved as part of the musical heritage of Darfur?

Khatir: In fact, a few of these instruments are still in use due to people's tendency towards western music. To preserve these instruments, we need to manufacture them or rehabilitate the old ones and store them appropriately. Currently, there is no centre in Darfur dedicated to collecting traditional musical instruments as part of maintaining Darfuri musical heritage.

VOD: Is there a specific traditional dance for each song?

Khatir: Yes, each song has its own dance, and the lyrics are often linked to the occasion. For instance, the Hajouri song is associated with a coordinated high jumping of the boys and the girls. The Ferangabia dance, which was formerly used in circumcision rituals, is today performed in all joyful occasions, including marriage, reception of tribal Emirs and leaders, and graduation ceremonies; it is associated with the Tumbol drum carried hanging from the neck and played by a single man while women sing and dance.

VOD: What about costumes? Are there special costumes for each dance associated with a song?



A cultural group playing a trapezoidal instrument called “Nuqara” during a UNAMID outreach event organized in El Fasher, North Darfur. Darfur is known for its rich, diversified culture. Photo by Mohamad Almahady, UNAMID.

Khatir: Yes, many dances require their specific costumes. For instance, in the Kinnin (Tuareg) tribe dance, Tendi, the dancers wear a full costume called Gorombubu and without it the dance would be meaningless as it would be stripped of the exciting aesthetic value linked to the movement of the wide garment during performance. The same applies to the Jarrari dance, particularly for female dancers who are required to put on the Sudanese National thobe. It is also the case with the Dadaz dance that requires wearing the large Aba’ah for men. This dance has a social role as it is played exclusively by elders and the costume should be that of elders. However, some dances don’t require a specific costume.

VOD: Are there songs in Darfur exclusively performed by women?

Khatir: Definitely, there are songs that are women-specific. There are wedding procession and wedding Henna songs in Darfur, where women sing during the process of applying henna to the bride and the bridegroom. There is the Hadhada (lulling) song which is one of the lofty inherited traditions linked to the bringing up of children

in a socially and behaviourally healthy mode; it is a song performed by mothers to bring up the children to respect culture, politeness and good manners. It is a calm song with simple words where the mother describes her baby with such attributes as bravery, generosity and wealth. There are also songs performed by the Hakkama, a female poet and singer who delivers impromptu songs as per the events presented before her. She is one of the figures of the local society and plays a significant social role. Some say that when any group is facing impending danger that can threaten its unity, the automatic response is to resort to the heritage represented in poetry and songs. Here arises the role of the Hakkamat songs related to defence and sacrifice for the group and family.

VOD: Are war songs still performed widely throughout Darfur or have the songs of peace become more pervasive?

Khatir: Actually, war songs today have become less popular, as most people want to see peace and peaceful co-existence because conflict has claimed many lives and destroyed the

country, economically, socially and culturally. Peace songs, on the other hand, have spread widely and most musicians and singers have diverted their work toward peace songs and produced works that call for peace, love and discarding blind bigotry.

VOD: In your opinion, is it possible to perform a Darfuri song where several singers from different tribes sing together with the aim to enhance peace and reconciliation among different groups?

Mr. Khatir: This is definitely possible, if funding and technical support are provided. Music acknowledges no borders, colour or ethnicity. If people listen to such a song through the internet, or in special occasions or on TV and radio, they would be encouraged towards unity, love and solving disputes consensually.

VOD: In conclusion, what is your message to the people of Darfur?

Khatir: I hope peace will prevail across Sudan, in general, and Darfur, in particular, and that we work towards sustainable development and unite for a healthy country free of the scourge of war and racism, so that the doors of peace will open to all Darfuris. ■



Alfadil Khatir, a renowned Darfuri musician and lecturer at the University of El Fasher is pictured at the Sultan Ali Dinar Museum in El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Mohamed Almahady, UNAMID.



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