



UNAMID

BULLETIN



UNAMID SWINGS INTO ACTION AS THOUSANDS OF IDPs POUR INTO ZAM ZAM

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MISSION IN DARFUR

BULLETIN No 1

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Photo: Nektarios Markogiannis

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UNAMID SWINGS INTO ACTION AS THOUSANDS OF IDPs POUR INTO ZAM ZAM

Humanitarian UNAMID liaison staff have provided shelter and other assistance to the thousands of people who have been arriving by truck or donkey in recent weeks to further swell the population at Zam Zam, one of Darfur's biggest camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Members of the mission's Humanitarian Recovery, Development and Liaison Section (HRDLS) dispatched tents to the camp to assist some of the new arrivals, who have fled deadly fighting and Janjaweed attacks in Muhajeriya, Labado and other South Darfur towns.

UNAMID military officers pitched the tents to house the new arrivals, who are predominantly women or children from the Zaghawa tribe. The mass influx is growing by the day and threatens to overwhelm the overburdened facilities at Zam Zam, especially the provision of water.

Estimates of the exact number of new arrivals vary, but UN officials believe more than 23,000 people have reached the camp – which lies just beyond the southern outskirts of El Fasher – since late January. Before the influx Zam Zam was already home to about 50,000 residents.

HRDLS chief Daniel Augstburger says his staff are monitoring the situation, both at Zam Zam and in the towns in South Darfur which the IDPs fled. But he adds that many questions remain about the new arrivals.

“Are they going to stay? Are they going to continue? What is their intention?” he asks, stressing that both UNAMID and UN

humanitarian agencies will continue to try to alleviate the situation.

So far there are no signs of serious malnutrition among the new arrivals, nor indications of violent behaviour.



Photos: Nektarios Markogiannis



DESTRUCTION IN WADA'AH: UNAMID CONDEMNS DEADLY CLASHES AND HELPS VICTIMS



Photo: Nektarios Markogiannis

UNAMID's Force Commander has condemned the fighting in Wada'ah that has destroyed most of the North Darfur town, displaced or uprooted hundreds of families and caused an unknown number of casualties.

General Martin Luther Agwai led a fact-finding and assessment team of senior military and civilian officials to the Wada'ah area – located about 90 kilometres south-east of El Fasher – after the Mission received reports of several days of deadly clashes in early February.

The team saw first-hand the damage inflicted during its tour of the town. The marketplace has been looted and burned to the ground, and dozens of shops, houses and generators have been destroyed. UNAMID officials observed that the damage appears to have been deliberately inflicted rather than the indirect result of combat.

The fighting in Wada'ah involved residents and members of the Minni Minawi wing of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA/MM), and locals said that food, goods, medical supplies and water pump equipment were stolen and numerous livestock herded out of the area.

At two sites near the town, UNAMID members saw fresh

mounds of earth that residents told them covered the newly dug mass graves of 45 civilians.

During his visit General Agwai condemned the clashes and called on all parties to refrain from further violence and destruction of property and to seek a peaceful resolution of their conflict. He also voiced grave concern about the humanitarian impact of the fighting.

The Mission has been unable to verify a precise casualty toll or the number of people missing in Wada'ah. An inter-agency humanitarian assessment team found that more than 800 families remain affected by the clashes, although relative calm has been restored and locals say that most residents who fled have since returned.

The assessment team identified the most urgent needs and concerns of the residents. Foremost is the fear that the (SLA/MM) may return to attack Wada'ah again, while food shortages, rising malnutrition rates and a lack of decent water and sanitation facilities are also causing problems.

HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN CLUB TOGETHER FOR PEACE



Hundreds of children have joined newly formed peace clubs in their local schools as part of a UNAMID initiative that aims to use Darfur's younger residents to spread the message of peace.

Students will have the responsibility of helping organize sports competitions, poetry recitals, mock parliaments, painting exhibitions and other events – all with the aim of bringing youth together and highlighting the importance of peace in a region that has endured persistent conflict and enormous humanitarian suffering since 2003.

The peace clubs, the brainwave of the community outreach unit of UNAMID's Communication and Public Information Division (CPID), are designed to allow the members to express their views about the current situation and to devise ways to improve the situation in Darfur. Participants will be encouraged to learn more about the work of the Mission and to pass on their knowledge and perspectives to their parents and the wider community.

UNAMID is handing out informational materials, including Arabic-language copies of its mandate and the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, to the clubs and developing a "peace library" or allotted space in each school where UN-related books and other resources are readily available to pupils.

The clubs – to be headed by a teacher in each school – will eventually be launched in dozens of secondary and tertiary schools across Darfur. Initially the clubs are being piloted in four schools, and "the reaction has been fantastic so far," according to Daniel Adekera, the head of CPID's community outreach unit.

"We wanted to take advantage of the sentiment that is out there... We wanted to give children the opportunity to share their own perspectives for peace. The children will have a powerful voice if they have the medium to air their views," he said.

The response to the peace club idea was particularly enthusiastic at the first school visited, El Fasher Model Secondary School, where more than 100 girls signed up.

Mr. Adekera, his colleague Reuben Inaju and Musi Khumalo, the acting chief of UNAMID radio, explained the peace club concept to students and then took part in a lively question-and-answer session.



NIGERIANS SCORE A GOAL IN COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN NYALA

It wasn't quite Manchester United versus Liverpool, or Real Madrid taking on FC Barcelona at the Nou Camp, but there was still plenty of soccer skill and spirit on display last week when the members of UNAMID's Nigerian Battalion 6 team took on the might of Elahli football club in Nyala.



Photos: Saeed Abd Allah Adam

The final score was nil-nil in the late afternoon match, played on a pitch opposite Nyala University and attended by a sizeable and enthusiastic crowd of UNAMID military personnel from Sector South, Elahli supporters and other spectators.

Major J.J. Ishaya, coach of the Nigerian Battalion 6 team, said the match was designed to help foster better relations between the Mission and the local community in South Darfur state.

Elahli's director, Abdul Majid, said afterwards that the match had served as a good tune-up for his team – one of the best known in the region – ahead of this season's local football championships.

But he may have reason to be worried; when the same teams clashed last year, the local side had a comfortable 2-0 victory. Next time they clash, the Nigerians (who wore yellow this time) will be ready to pounce.





FINAL BATCH OF SENEGALESE TROOPS JOINS BATTALION IN EL GENEINA

The final group of 150 Senegalese troops has arrived in West Darfur to complete the membership of their country's first infantry battalion to serve with UNAMID.

After a flight from Dakar to El Fasher last week, the troops travelled in two batches by helicopter to El Geneina, where they will be based as part of the Mission's efforts to restore security across the war-torn Sudanese region.

The infantry battalion's main duties include conducting patrols to enhance security among the local population and conducting escorts for humanitarian convoys.

The battalion was part of the original troops that transferred from the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to UNAMID at the end of 2007, but the arrival of the additional group of soldiers this week takes the total number of members to 800 and ensures that the battalion's size complies with UN peacekeeping standards.

Senegalese Lieutenant-Colonel Chekh



Photos: Olivier Chassot

Mbodj, a civilian-military liaison officer with UNAMID, says the extra troops will help "reinforce the work of the battalion and ensure it can meet its

commitments."

A second infantry battalion from Senegal is scheduled to arrive in Darfur later this year.



SOMETHING FISHY IN SOUTH DARFUR?

UNAMID is regularly asked to transport all kinds of cargo – from tents and food aid to vehicles and generators – as it works to implement its mandate across Darfur. Earlier this month, however, it responded to an unusual request: live fish.



Photos: Kone Mouroulaye

Two Mission helicopters transported 10 water-filled barrels of fish from Nyala to the town of Um Dafog, a South Darfur town close to the border with the Central African Republic, on 18 February. The collective weight of the cargo was 5,000 kilograms.

Now the fish have taken residence at a pond, where they will be raised as part of a livelihood project supported by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other agencies as part of their efforts to increase development and boost incomes in local communities.

The fish received VIP treatment throughout their journey. On the flight they were accompanied by two veterinary doctors and one veterinary assistant to ensure they handled the trip smoothly. When they landed in Um Dafog, they were met by many of Um Dafog's leading officials, including the local umdahs (native administration representatives).

Local officials thanked UNAMID for transporting the fish, saying the project is vital for the local area's economic development.





A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

This photo essay is the first in a series that aims to illustrate what daily life is like for various members of UNAMID.

UNAMID'S INDONESIAN POLICE CONTINGENT



Some 143 Indonesian police are serving in Darfur as part of UNAMID's efforts to ensure greater peace and stability in the Sudanese region.



Nearly all are based in El Fasher, the North Darfur capital, as members of a formed police unit (FPU).

UNAMID'S INDONESIA POLICE CONTINGENT



They patrol the town, the Mission headquarters and the nearby camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs).



Recently the FPU has begun regular night-time patrols of two of the camps, Abu Shouk and El Salaam, to bolster the security for residents.



It is the first time that Indonesia has contributed a FPU to a peacekeeping mission.

*Photos: Olivier Chassot
& Nektarios Markogiannis*