

A photograph of a woman in a blue headscarf and a child in a yellow shirt being loaded into a truck. The truck is filled with various items, including a large white jerrycan. The scene is set in a rural or conflict-affected area.

UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur

VOICES

of Darfur

JULY/AUGUST 2011

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN DARFUR - A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD

IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND POVERTY ON
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN NORTH DARFUR

RETURNEE HOPE FOR A LIFE OF
PEACE AND SECURITY



AFRICAN UNION - UNITED NATIONS
MISSION IN DARFUR
(UNAMID)

IN THIS ISSUE

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TIMELINE

03 | June at a glance

04 | July at a glance

WOMEN

05 | When the future has the colour of hope

EDUCATION

06 | Impact of conflict and poverty on children's education in North Darfur

UNAMID

08 | UNAMID serving Darfuri communities

RETURNEES

10 | North Darfur returnees hope for a life of peace and security

COMMUNITY

12 | A Photo exhibition to honor Darfuris

PEACE

14 | Prospects for peace in Darfur – a significant step forward

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Back Cover by Albert Gonzalez Farran



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JUNE AT A GLANCE

JUNE
05

Justice Mohamed Chande Othman, UN Independent Expert on the situation of Human Rights arrives in El Fasher, North Darfur. He is briefed by UNAMID's leadership on the human rights situation in the region since his last visit in March, protection of civilians including UNAMID staff, and related challenges faced by the Mission. During the Envoy's three-day mission in Darfur, he also meets with government officials, state judges and prosecutors, civil society actors, aid workers, as well as with UN agencies in Nyala, South Darfur.

JUNE
06

African Union Chairperson, Mr. Jean Ping, arrives in El Fasher during a three-day visit to Sudan where he is met by DJSR Mohamed B. Yonis and other senior officials. Mr. Ping acknowledges the Mission's role in and support for the All Darfur Stakeholders' Conference in Qatar. Mr. Ping later meets with the Wali of North Darfur to discuss developments in the region and collaboration for providing timely assistance to those most affected by the instability.



JUNE
07

A two-week long disarmament, demobilization and reintegration campaign concludes in Nyala, South Darfur where more than 1,100 ex-fighters lay down arms and begin the process to return to civilian life. The former combatants who were members of both Sudanese Armed Forces and those rebel groups who had signed previous peace accords with the Government also underwent a medical examination and a psychological assessment.

JUNE
13

UNAMID delivers 10,000 liters of water to the community of El Sereif, 45 km north of El Fasher, North Darfur, to aid the construction of several much-needed water pumps. This project is the latest in UNAMID's ongoing collaboration with the North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (NSDDR), to construct and develop water facilities in support of disarmament programmes.

JUNE
19

Residents of the village of Ararri, 45 km north of El Fasher, North Darfur, celebrate the reopening of their school, which has been completed as part of a project supported by UNAMID's disarmament programme. Since conducting a disarmament mission to the region in 2009 in collaboration with the North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (NSDDR), UNAMID has backed several initiatives to develop the community's water and education facilities. The Mission provided more than 100,000 liters of water to support the school's construction.

JUNE
20

More than 700 residents of West Darfur's Sirba locality are joined by UNAMID's regional leadership in marking the opening of a new native administration headquarters. The hall's construction was funded by UNAMID's quick impact projects initiative to support the vital role of local leaders in resolving conflicts and mediating peace among ethnic groups. UNAMID's regional Head of Office, Dysane Dorani, acknowledges the role of traditional leaders in democratic governance, adding that the facility will "promote communal integration and improve harmonious relationships through social meetings and activities among tribes in a warm conducive atmosphere."

JUNE
22

A UNAMID-sponsored 9 kilometre marathon through El Fasher, North Darfur, marks the successful conclusion of a series of community outreach sporting events. The race was preceded by a number of activities, including a volleyball match between female teams from El Fasher and nearby internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. A football match was also held for displaced children in the city's largest stadium.

JUNE
23

Following talks with UNAMID's General Commander of the Sudan Liberation Army Abdul Wahid faction, Mohammed Adam Abdelsalam Tarada, issues a renewed command order prohibiting the use and recruitment of child soldiers.

- UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (DJSR) for Operations and Management, Mohamed Yonis, and the Mission's senior leadership receives German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle in El Fasher, North Darfur, on his first visit to the region. He is briefed on

recent clashes in Darfur and the current state of the security situation. They also discuss the German Government's support for the peacekeeping operation and other recovery and development initiatives.

JUNE
24

The United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, arrives in El Fasher, North Darfur to assess the situation of displaced persons in the region. She meets State Ministers and representatives of the State's Committee for combating violence against women where they discuss collaboration between authorities and aid groups to facilitate the latter's access to and support for displaced populations, as well as UNAMID's participation in a sub-forum on human rights, where specific cases can be brought up with State government counterparts. During a visit to Zam Zam internally displaced persons (IDP) camp just outside of El Fasher, North Darfur, Ms. Kang expresses her "shock" at living conditions there, describing them as being on a "totally different scale" from others that she has visited.

JUNE
26

UNAMID Communications and Public Information Division (CPID) signs an agreement with the National Public Radio Corporation (NPRC) for the broadcast of UNAMID Radio programmes on Al Salaam Radio and Darfur state radio stations as a bridging solution until the Mission receives a broadcast license. According to terms of the agreement, beginning 3 July, UNAMID Radio will air programmes on Al Salaam Radio two hours daily, with repeat broadcasts at appropriate times on Darfur state radio stations.



JUNE
27

United Nations Military Chief of Staff, Brig. Gen. Jean Bailaud visits UNAMID regional offices in South and West Darfur as part of a two-day visit to the region. He is briefed at UNAMID's headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur, on the Mission's deployment status and the current security situation and recent developments trends in the region. The team later meets with peacekeepers stationed in Zam Zam team site, on the outskirts of El Fasher, to discuss challenges faced on the ground in carrying out the Mission's mandate.

JULY AT A GLANCE

**JULY
02**

Five UNAMID peacekeepers from Ethiopia travelling in a UNAMID minibus were shot at by assailant on the side of the road between the El Geneina airport and the town. One peacekeeper was shot and later died of his injuries on 30 June in El Geneina, West Darfur and a second peacekeeper sustained an injury to one arm and is in stable condition. No motive has been established in the case, which is being investigated by UNAMID military police and Sudanese police.

**JULY
03**

The UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (DJSR), Mohamed Yonis, addresses the Sudanese parliament on the outcome of the Darfur International Conference on Water for Sustainable Peace held in Khartoum on 27-28 June.

A disarmament campaign is launched in El Fasher, North Darfur, where more than 400 ex-combatants are to lay down arms over the coming days. The exercise is a joint effort by UNAMID and the North Sudan Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission. The former fighters come from the Sudanese Armed Forces and several rebel movements. During the campaign, UNAMID will be providing logistic and medical support.

**JULY
06**

The JSR introduces the Mission's new Deputy Joint Special Representatives (Political), Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou from Niger who arrived on 30 June. Ms. Mindaoudou succeeds Gen. (Rtd) Henry Anyidoho who left the Mission more than a year ago.



**JULY
07**

UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Ibrahim Gambari officially opens a level II hospital built by the Egyptian Engineering company and operated by the Mongolian contingent in Kabkabiya, North Darfur. The hospital is intended to serve UN personnel in the

region but since it began operation in March, forty per cent of its patients have been local Darfuris. It provides emergency care, dental services, pharmaceutical services and other forms of treatment.

"This hospital contributes to the stability of the area because it is not only for UNAMID staff, but it will also serve the community at no cost," said JSR Gambari.

**JULY
12**

UNAMID Gender Advisory Unit, in collaboration with the Women's Union, launched on 11 July the Committee on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in Zalingei, West Darfur. The ceremony was attended by Government and UNAMID senior officials and civil society.

**JULY
13**

UNAMID Sudanese staff member Ms. Hawa Abdalla Mohamed arrested on 6 May by National Security was released from detention in Khartoum. She underwent a medical examination and appears to be in good health. A second staff, Mr. Idriss Abdelrahman, who had been in detention on 27 April, was also released on 20 July in Nyala, South Darfur.



**JULY
17**

UNAMID in collaboration with the Sudanese traffic police to install road safety checkpoints, launch a road safety campaign of awareness activities during this week under the theme "Road Safety Starts with Us."

**JULY
19**

Following the signing in Doha of a protocol agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Ibrahim Gambari urge the African Union's Peace and Security Council to "lend its weight" to convince all Darfuri parties to engage "urgently and sincerely in the search for comprehensive peace in Darfur" through an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and re-engagement in the political process.

He delivered his latest report on UNAMID and the situation in Darfur to the UN Security Council in New York on 22 July.

**JULY
23**

Two UNAMID peacekeepers are injured on 22 July in an ambush by unknown persons between Ardamata and Derti internally displaced persons (IDP) Camps, near El Geneina, West Darfur, while escorting two fuel tankers. One soldier sustained a gunshot injury to the shoulder and has been evacuated to Khartoum. His condition is serious. The other soldier, who was wounded on one of his hands, was taken to the Mission hospital in El Geneina and is in a stable condition. UNAMID is currently investigating the incident.

**JULY
24**

UNAMID started to provide logistic support to a 6 weeks environmental campaign organized by local authorities in El Fasher town, North Darfur. The campaign is aimed at reducing health risks among the population, particularly cholera and other waterborne diseases during the rainy season.

**JULY
27**

A UNAMID patrol investigating reports of recent air strikes in the vicinity of Abu Hamara, located approximately 20 kilometers west of Khor Abeche, in South Darfur has confirmed that such strikes took place, resulting in the death of one civilian and two wounded. UNAMID also noted that a number of villagers had fled their homes in the aftermath of the strikes.



**JULY
29**

The United Nations Security Council extends UNAMID's mandate for one year until 31 July 2012. It demanded that all parties to the Darfur conflict, "including all armed movements, engage in talks immediately, and without preconditions," to reach a permanent ceasefire and a comprehensive peace settlement.

When the future has the colour of hope

Interview with a Darfuri woman on the day of her demobilization

BY CATARINA VIOLENTE

Alima is a smiling woman, happy to tell her story to UNAMID, as she continues to undergo a day-long demobilization exercise in El Fasher. Today, she has taken the steps to become a messenger of peace in the Zam Zam community of internally displaced persons, located just outside of El Fasher.

Born in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, in 1968, she left her home with her family – mother, five brothers and six sisters – when the conflict was escalating in 2005. She arrived as an internally displaced person (IDP) in Zam Zam. She had joined the "Mothers" faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA/M) a year before her displacement. At that time, many of Alima's friends were active in the movement, which she voluntarily joined, identifying her aspirations with those of its members. She was not a fighter, but was supporting the administration of the movement's resources, especially the collection of money for the preparation of meals.

At the end of 2009, following the demobilization of part of the SLA/M movement in El Fasher, Alima appreciated the opportunity that was being offered for reinsertion into civilian life.

Today, she feels grateful because she is being demobilized and reintegration will soon follow. She repeats that she really wants stability for the community where she lives and she wishes to be productive as soon as possible. "I want to be normal," she says, expressing the inner human desire to have a proper job, create a family and, overall, live in a secure environment.

Before entering the movement, Alima was a farmer, growing beans that she sold at the local market. When the conflict affected her life, she lost her daily livelihood. She now wants to be a trader. She is deeply concerned about the success of her future initiative. "I will trade Sudanese dresses in the market," as, according to her, this is the best choice considering the needs of her community.

Today Alima looks forward to the future from a different perspective; she tells us she feels like a citizen of Darfur and that she



Alima at the location of the demobilization exercise in El Fasher

PHOTO: DDR ARCHIVES

will socially and economically reintegrate in her community; she will marry and have a family. She again refers to the need for stability, peace and development in Darfur. "I will volunteer and work for the

peace of my community." This time, Alima will do so outside of the rebel movement. She is ready to be a "warrior" for peace.

THE AUTHOR IS A DDR OFFICER WITH UNAMID

Embarking on their unilateral initiatives on DDR in Darfur, the North Sudan DDR Commission, with support from UNAMID, has started implementing the interim DDR programme in North Darfur.

The first phase of demobilization commenced during November 2009 during which 200 members of the SAF (Sudanese Armed Forces), 49 of the PDF (Popular Defence Forces and, 57 of the SLA/M (Sudanese Liberation Army/Mothers) were demobilized, amounting to 306 ex-combatants. Eleven of them were women.

The second phase of demobilization exercise in El Fasher, was held from 4 to 12 July 2011. A total of 400 ex - combatants were demobilized, which included 112 from the SAF, 100 from the PDF, 50 from the SLA/FW and 138 from the SLA/M. Of these, 26 are women.

During the demobilization exercise, the ex- combatants go through a medical screening, HIV/AIDS advisory, briefing on their future prospects, data entry/ socio-economic profiling; and are given identity cards, before receiving a partial payment of a reinsertion allowance



Impact of conflict and poverty on children's education in North Darfur

BY ALA MAYYAH

Since his father died during the conflict, eight-year old Ahmed Adam has been working in the city centre of El Fasher, North Darfur, to help his mother support the family. "I go to the big markets with my polish box and shine the shoes of passersby; I make 5, sometimes 10 pounds (\$1 to \$3) a day and give them to my mother... I'm in third grade but I have to work to help my family," he said. Ahmed's family lives in Al Salam camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Many other children in IDP camps quit school to work in different small jobs in the markets. Abdel Rahman Ahmed Issa, a 12-year old child, lives in Abu Shok IDP camp, his father died at the beginning of the conflict. Now he works on the farm

with his mother. He says he has to help her in order to feed his two younger sisters and brother. Mohamed Adam, 12 years old, washes cars parked in the city centre as his daily work. Adam Ahmed Adam, a 17-year old, collects empty cans from neighbours' garbage, takes them to a workshop to make toys for sale. His father was killed when their village in Feina, in eastern Jebel Marra, was attacked. More examples can be easily spotted in the cities, and on their outskirts throughout Darfur.

The situation in the Institution of Primary Education for males, a public school established in 1972 in a residential neighborhood in El Fasher, clearly reflects the negative impact of conflict

and poverty. The school receives up to 150 students every year, originally from villages, who fled with their families to the city due to armed attacks. Most of these students quit school before graduating. "Twenty-five percent of our students stop coming to school starting from age 10 because of financial reasons," says the school's manager, Mr. Altijani Ibrahim. As part of the public education system, the school's annual tuition fee is 60 Sudanese pounds (almost \$19), while books and notebooks have to be purchased from the markets. A new school book costs five Sudanese pounds and a notebook one pound. "These prices are a financial burden for most parents because they are poor," Altijani says. "The improvement in security in Darfur in the last two years resulted



left. Girl at school in Darfur

PHOTO: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

top right. A young student at the boys
Institution of Primary Education
in El Fasher

top. Manager of the Institution of Primary
Education, Altijani Ibrahim

PHOTO: ALA MAYYAH

in a larger number of new students, but the increase in prices is now the biggest challenge for parents, especially for those coming from the villages as most of them end up in low income jobs," Altijani explains.

Even worse, some children are affiliated with armed movements and became embroiled in perpetrating violent acts although there are many international conventions that criminalize such acts that would interfere with children's education or be detrimental to a child's physical, mental, or moral status. In line with the support of the international community for children's rights, the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) unit of UNAMID is supporting several

programmes throughout the region, in cooperation with government institutions and international partners, for the release of children associated with armed movements and to help them rejoin society.

Despite the current support of the international community and the Government, most schools in Darfur lack basic necessities. "We have the students' annual fees, which are hardly enough to maintain the school. It is quite costly for us to buy tools or furniture, so we repair the broken pieces, but even that is expensive. The school needs sufficient proper desks, clean water containers and bathrooms, among other equipment and amenities, and we need the Government to boost its

support for the public schools. Sometimes we buy the books for them on our own as entire classes of 50 students have only one old book," Altijani said. "We can only hope that in the future no child in Darfur will need to quit school for work," Altijani added smiling.

While he was talking, the classrooms around him were crowded and loud with the palpable excitement of students who were raising their hands in anticipation. They were eager to participate in class and full of energy. It is worth mentioning that in the last two years many children in El Fasher can be seen walking in their clean uniforms, happily carrying their books, a reflection of their sense of safety as well as their determination for learning.



Women and children at their camp outside UNAMID Tanzanian Battalion team site in Khor Abeche, South Darfur

PHOTOS: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

UNAMID serving Darfuri communities

BY SALEEMULLAH BAIG

For Fatima, a 7 year old girl living in a makeshift camp in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, the most important part of the day is the evening when she could play with her friends in the flood lights around the UNAMID team site. She and her friends spend hot summer days in temporary shelters made from wooden sticks, pieces of cloth and scraps of plastic, while their parents and older siblings rear the cattle and collect firewood. For her, this time serves as a coping mechanism to forget the trauma she faced when she and her family had to leave their home and comfort of a normal life. Every evening she joins other young girls who sit in groups, play Abun Tugar (a game of seven pebbles), share folk tales and sing songs.

Hundreds of households were displaced from their villages when violence erupted



Young Internally displaced boys feel safe at the Tanzanian Battalion team site in Khor Abeche

in December last year in Khor Abeche. Fearing for their lives, they ran to one of the UNAMID team sites next to their village and later erected their shelters around it to form a makeshift IDP camp.

UNAMID is providing all-day security to the internally displaced persons (IDPs). Short and long range patrols are conducted during the day time. At night, at least three armoured personnel carriers (APCs) manned by dozens of protection force soldiers secure the outer parameters of the camp. The Mission has also installed water tanks to support the IDPs. One of the Sheikhs, who coordinates the IDP affairs, shared a heartening story of one girl aged 11 who was bitten by a snake and left unattended in a nearby village for three days before she and her mother were spotted by one of the UNAMID

patrols and brought to the team site clinic so she could be treated. He lauded the protection and support UNAMID was providing to his community.

Ms. Haja, a women's leader and mother of six, although very concerned about her children's education, exclaimed, "Life is more important than any other thing; I feel secure and my children are safe. Insha'Allah (God willing), one day we will return to our normal lives."

Like with any other conflict, children and women in Darfur are the most affected population and have no access to coping mechanisms. With limited humanitarian services in the area, UNAMID is generally the first point of contact for the community. The Mission coordinates

provision of humanitarian services with other UN agencies. Most recently, the Gender Advisory unit, on the demand of volunteer teachers from the community, has been discussing with relevant UN agencies arrangements for temporary shelters to run a school for the children who have not been able to attend since they were displaced.

Responding to the question of what would she like to do when she grows up, Fatima whispered to her friends, giggled, and said with her eyes glittering, "I will become educated, travel in airplanes and visit other countries."

THE AUTHOR IS A GENDER AFFAIRS OFFICER WITH UNAMID

North Darfur returnees hope for a life of peace and security

BY SHARON LUKUNKA



A young boy looks out of a bus transporting returnees back to Sejhenna, North Darfur

PHOTOS: ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

More than seven years ago, Aradia Adam and her family were among those who fled the Kutum area in North Darfur and settled nearly 100 kilometres away in Aramba village, Kabkabiya. Recently, they decided to return home to begin rebuilding their community. A day before they embarked on the journey back home in July 2011, Aradia was packing the possessions they had acquired -- firewood, tents and straw to make shelter, buckets and sacks of sorghum and millet for their meals.

She tearfully expressed happiness to be going back home, to join the rest of her family and friends who had left before her. "I want to build a home for my family and cultivate our land that we left," she said.

Most of the people in Aradia's community said they decided to go home after learning that their original village was

actually peaceful and calm. For many, it is a journey of hope, to begin returning home, rebuilding where they left off more than seven years ago.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies were requested by the Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) to assist with the return and reintegration of 230 semi nomadic IDP families from Aramba in Kabkabiya to Sejhenna village, 15 kilometers north-west of Kutum in North Darfur. The five-day returnee operation was supported by UNHCR, the HAC, and other UN agencies. UNAMID provided security and escort along the return route, as well as water and medical services.

"This is one of the first (IDP) return operations conducted in North Darfur to be led by UNHCR," said Associate Field

Officer, Simon Peter Onyango. UNHCR's protection cluster took over the mantle of returns in April this year. "Our agency is also conducting returnee exercises in West Darfur," he added.

Travelling north for more than 95 kilometers, the first group composed of more than 180 returnees arrived in Sejhenna after a 12-hour journey in trucks and buses. The convoy accompanied by UNAMID military and police drove through narrow, rocky and muddy roads, crossing through valleys before approaching Merla about 54 kilometers from Aramba village where a second UNAMID escort took over until they reached their final destination. Their animals, numbering several thousand, travelled by foot with young herders on a trip that took about three days.

UNAMID's military operations officer in Kabkabiya, Major Elly Kara, emphasized

that one of UNAMID's responsibilities is to work closely with UN agencies to facilitate their work and ensure the full protection of civilians in the region.

More than 800 individuals have expressed interest in returning to their original homes in Sejhenna, a wide oasis full of trees. Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) representative, Ahmed Ibrahim Dwelbalt, said more than 1,000 families came to Aramba village in 2003 and the agency had been working with UN agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as UNAMID to provide basic needs such as education, health centres and water for the displaced population. A clinic was established and operated by UNICEF and the Sudan Red Crescent.

The World Food Programme will provide four months of supplementary food for all of the returnees to Sejhenna, who began coming back to the village last year. They are scattered around the area with some living along the wadi (valley) to take advantage of the fertile soil. Fadilla Hamadan El Shiek and 15 of her family members were among the first arrivals. So far, the village has a school building with two classrooms, which need rehabilitation. It also has two water points, as well as a clinic located in Damrad El Sheikh about 2 kilometres away and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO). However, returnees voiced their concerns about the availability of water. Sheikh Mohammed Ali echoed an urgent need for more water in the region. "The water source is running dry. Sometimes the people have to spend a night at the water point to wait for the water table to rise," he stated. To address these urgent needs in Sejhenna, UNICEF and its local implementing partner, Sudan Water and Environmental Sanitation sector (WES), have said they will begin digging water wells as well as rehabilitate the existing water points shortly. They will also provide two water bladders because the area currently faces an acute shortage of water. UNAMID has also been requested to deliver water to the returnees.

When the conflict escalated in 2003, Sudanese forces occupied the area as one of their defensive positions. Subsequently, due to the returns, a team from UNAMID's Ordnance Disposal Office (ODO) was deployed in the region to clear any mines or unexploded ordnance that may have been left. UNAMID cleared 621,029 square

metres of remnants of war to secure the area for the returnees.

During their stay in Aramba, the residents had maintained a nomadic lifestyle -- while half of the population remained in the village, the other half took the livestock to pasture lands and migration routes. One of the key factors that contributed to the Darfur conflict was the competition between pastoralists and farmers over land ownership and water resources. Today the nomadic community living in North Darfur relies mainly on livestock and small scale farming, and receives assistance from UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and local government.

Much of North and South Darfur are still experiencing clashes between armed movements which has resulted in a continuation of masses of people fleeing their villages, but there are other areas where people are heading home, noted Sheikh Mohamed.

As the IDPs returned to Sejhenna, they were welcomed by their families and friends. Fatima Ali Ahmed ran to hug her friend upon arrival. Both women were weeping with joy, glad they had successfully made the long journey back home safe

to rebuild their community. Families could not wait to begin offloading their belongings from the buses and trucks. More families are expected to return to Sejhenna village from Aramba in the coming weeks assisted by UNHCR, other UN agencies, and UNAMID. UN Agencies and UNAMID will conduct an assessment visit to the area following completion of the return exercise, to assess the needs of the population and determine how best they can further assist these returnees.

The humanitarian community continues to strive to support the people of Darfur by helping to build a favourable environment and ensure that IDPs living among local communities have access to basic services. Humanitarian services provide assistance in IDP camps and to the communities of origin as well as in urban areas, where there are prospects for durable livelihoods.

"Darfur should not be forgotten," JSR Gambari recently reminded the international community. "The world celebrated the independence of South Sudan; we need to celebrate the end of the fighting in Darfur, so the people of Darfur can begin to live normal lives, and these 1.8 million IDPs can safely and voluntarily return to their homes." ■

A father and his children board the bus taking them back to their village in Sejhenna, North Darfur



A PHOTO EXHIBITION TO HONOUR DARFURIS

BY ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

Darfur up close was the first UNAMID sponsored photo exhibition to be mounted at United Nations headquarters in New York. Throughout the month of July, visitors were able to view images of the very human side of the conflict in Darfur that has displaced around 1.8 million civilians from their homes and has, so far, ignited one of Africa's more challenging humanitarian crises.

Through the photos of UNAMID photographer Albert González Farran, viewers were taken on an emotive and inspiring journey, guiding them through different angles of the conflict -- from a generic one to another more particular and human in nature. The project underlined the importance of the individuals in a situation that mass media usually treats as collective and generic.

The exhibition consisted of twenty large panels with three photographs on each one; twenty different stories relayed from three different photographic perspectives: wide shot, medium shot and close-up. It was a zoom effect of a camera getting closer from a wide angle to small detail. The tightest frame, the one exposing the privacy of the individual, became the most important shot in each group of three and it is the largest.

Darfur up close addressed a number of topics, focussing on particular cases among millions of people who live and work in Darfur -- displaced persons, refugees, returnees, villagers, soldiers, rebels, peacekeepers and aid officers. Each one, with his or her specific story, explained a very complicated conflict because it is time for individual stories to be included in history. ■





A doctor examines a displaced family in Kalma (South Darfur), before returning to their village in West Darfur



Members of the Sudanese army in Jawa village, in East Jebel Marra, South Darfur



A child in Buru, West Darfur, with a severe eye infection is attended to by UNAMID peacekeepers



A sheik (community leader) of Mornei camp, North Darfur, who lost family members in recent clashes, cries during a meeting with UNAMID JSR, Ibrahim Gambari



A child displays bullets collected from the ground in Rounyn, a village located north of Shangil Tobaya, North Darfur



An Egyptian peacekeeper prays beside a fellow soldier's coffin in Edd al Fursan, South Darfur



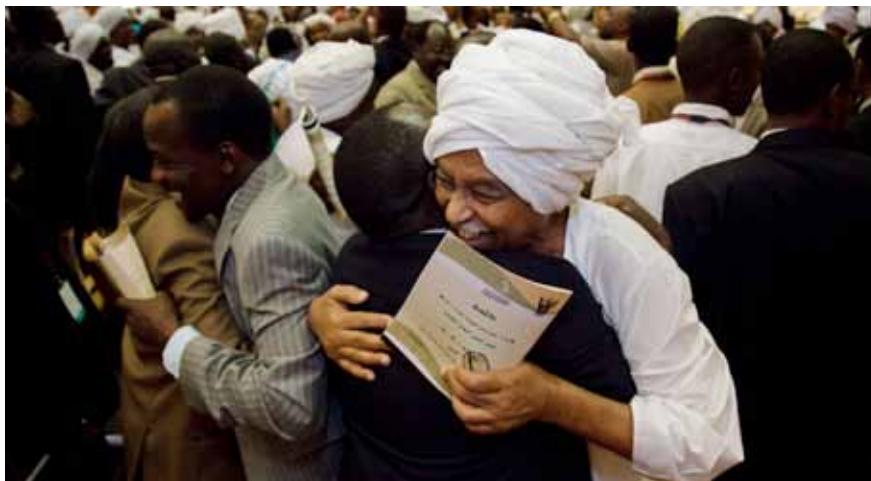
Prospects for peace in Darfur – a significant step forward

The All Darfur Stakeholders' Conference (ADSC) held in Doha in May was the culmination of the Doha Peace Process, which started in 2009. The event brought together more than 500 people including internally displaced persons, refugees, civil society, political parties, Darfuris in the diaspora, special envoys from more than 13 countries, and representatives

of international and regional organizations. A landmark achievement, the conference provided a forum for direct and face to face engagement between the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Government of the Sudan, along with Darfuri civil society.

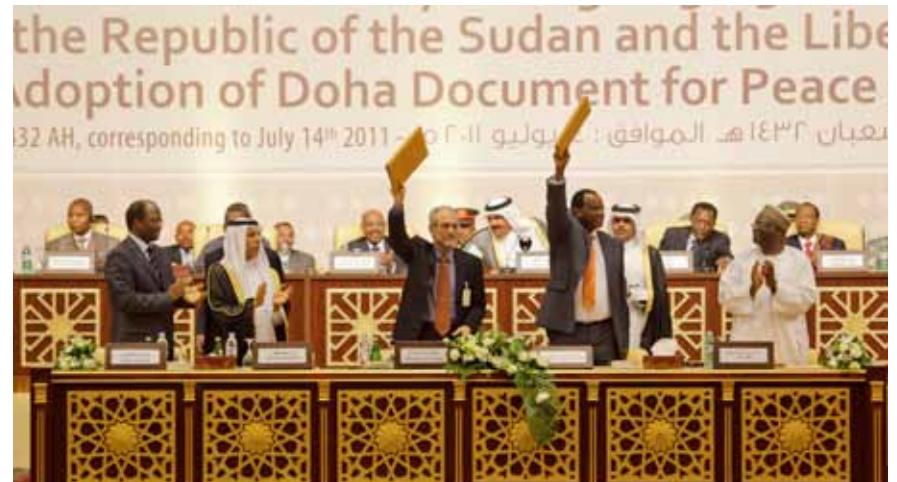
Dr. Khalil Adam, a civil society representative from Darfur, was among the participants attending the conference. He says since 2003, these organizations have been working together to address the root causes of the conflict by ensuring that the key issues are fully addressed in finding a solution. Consequently, civil society groups have participated in several relevant forums, including the Tripoli Declaration, the Abuja negotiations in 2006 and the Doha I and II outcome in 2009, which was widely disseminated throughout Darfur.

"We have been working with the JMST [Joint Mediation Support Team] to ensure that the document presented at this last conference addresses key issues, such as



left. Delegates celebrate the outcome of the All Darfur Stakeholders Conference in Doha, Qatar

PHOTOS: OLIVIER CHASSOT



top. Representatives of Government and rebel movements raise the signed Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DPPD) at the end of the stakeholders conference in Doha

left. A group of civil society representatives at the Doha negotiations

PHOTOS: OLIVIER CHASSOT

human rights and fundamental freedoms; justice and reconciliation and the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation and its implementation. The Conference also endorsed the formation of the Darfur Implementation follow-up committee, to be headed by Qatar, comprising members from the international community.

The Mediation made presentations to the participants on the salient provisions of the outcome Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DPPD), which were thoroughly discussed and debated both in working groups and plenary sessions. The civil society representatives endorsed this document, signed by the Government of the Sudan and the LJM, which leaves a grace period for other parties to the conflict to sign.

The Way Forward

Subsequent to these developments, the United Nations Security Council, on 29 July, by its resolution 2003, while welcoming the signing of the DPPD, demanded that "all parties to the conflict ... make every effort to reach a permanent ceasefire and comprehensive peace settlement" on its basis "to bring a stable and durable peace to the region". The Council also recognized "the potential complementary role of a Darfur-based Political Process (DPP) led by the AU and the UN" and called on the Government and armed movements to contribute to creating the enabling environment for its implementation.

UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR), Ibrahim Gambari has said, "While the

signing of the DPPD by the two parties represents an important step forward in the search for sustainable peace and stability in Darfur, it is my view that many daunting challenges remain." The first is how to continue engagement of the hold-out armed movements – JEM, the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid and the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi – and the Sudanese Government to agree to a cessation of hostilities, he stressed. It is essential to engage in pre-consultations with key Darfur stakeholders who demonstrated their support for the internal political process. Despite the gains of the conference, there was a need to keep the momentum and to ensure local ownership of the peace process by Darfuris at the grassroots level through a credible and transparent internal political process.

The JSR had emphasized during a recent interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that the Government of the Sudan and armed movements must "come to a compromise" on a comprehensive peace settlement.

It is only through comprehensive and sustainable peace that UNAMID can fully and effectively implement its mandate in Darfur and maximize its capacity to bring succour and hope to the sufferings of civilians. In sum, the ADSC and its outcome can be considered an important step forward in the search for peace and stability in Darfur.

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