

UNAMID's publication for the people of Darfur

VOICES

of Darfur

SEPTEMBER 2013

Music Therapy

A Conversation
with Musician
Mua'wiya Musa

**Day in the Life of a
UNAMID Peacekeeper**

*Working each day in
Darfur to protect civilians*

**An Impact-Oriented
Approach to Human Rights**

*Full-spectrum strategy
strengthens institutions*

**On Mediating Tribal
Conflicts in Darfur**

*Civil Affairs Chief writes
about way forward*



AFRICAN UNION - UNITED NATIONS
MISSION IN DARFUR
(UNAMID)



A close-up of the hands of Mr. Mua'wiya Musa, a popular El Fasher musician, as he plays in his sound studio at home. Mr. Musa, a composer, supports his work with a day job in graphic design, a field in which he received a university degree. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In presenting the September 2013 issue of *Voices of Darfur*, I'm pleased to share with you the news that this magazine recently won a Grand Award in the annual APEX competition. APEX awards are based on graphic design, editorial content and the ability to achieve overall communications excellence. There were some 2,400 entries in this year's competition. APEX gave out Grand Awards in 12 categories. *Voices of Darfur* won one of these Grand Awards.

This magazine takes the work of a dedicated team, and without the tireless efforts of our graphic designers, photographers, writers and translators, UNAMID would not have an award-winning magazine. The current issue before you, like other recent issues of *Voices*, 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 "Peacekeepers Remain Committed Despite Challenges," Ms. Sharon Lukunka offers an in-depth look at the military component of the Mission's operations, putting a human face on the dedicated peacekeepers who are risking their lives, each day, in the interest of protecting civilians and helping to create a stable environment in which peace can take root. Mr. Lukunka writes about how, from the front-line peacekeepers to the Force Commander's office, UNAMID's troops are focused on carrying out the mandate of the Mission.

In the viewpoint published in this issue, titled "Mediating Tribal Conflicts in Darfur," Ms. Retta Reddy, Chief of UNAMID's Civil Affairs section, explains how, while the main fighting between the armed movements and the Government continues to draw the attention away from the tribal conflicts, this year those conflicts have escalated and have become a more significant factor in the region. She discusses how UNAMID has been supporting and will continue to support mediation efforts to end these disputes and address the root causes of the conflict.

In "Bread: Darfur's Ubiquitous Food," Mr. Albert González Farran presents a photo essay designed to high-

light the most common food in the region. Bread-making, done at home or in bakeries across Darfur, is one of the most essential components of life here. In this region of Sudan, as in other parts of the world, bread is a regular fixture at almost every meal.

In "An Impact-Oriented Approach to Human Rights," Mr. Emadeldin Rijal writes about the approach the Human Rights section is taking in Darfur to strengthen rule-of-law institutions and justice mechanism. Mr. Rijal describes how the Mission's Human Rights Officers are not only observing and reporting, but also are taking an active role in education programmes and are working directly with local partners to strengthen justice-related institutions, with the ultimate goal of contributing to a stable and secure environment in which human rights can flourish.

In "Border Trade Contributing to Local Recovery," Ms. Lukunka offers a look at how Darfur's border towns and trading hubs have been affected by several factors in recent years, most notably the secession of South Sudan and the resulting border disputes that temporarily shut down trade routes in East Darfur. In covering the issue of international trade in Darfur, she describes how the economic downturn in Sudan, which has taken its toll on businesses in Darfur, has resulted in rising prices that have broadly affected traders and consumers in the region.

Finally, in our cover feature, "Music Therapy," Ms. Ala Mayyahi presents an interview with musician Mua'wiya Musa. In the interview, Mr. Musa describes how music plays a critical role in Darfur as a survival tool that can help people cope with life's hardships. In this sense, this El Fasher musician considers the music here to be a kind of ad hoc therapy, useful for helping struggling Darfuris not merely endure, but also look to a future filled with peace.

As *Voices of Darfur* continues to evolve as a news magazine, we welcome your feedback. To send comments by email, please put "Letters to the Editor / Voices of Darfur" in the subject line and send the email to unamid-publicinformation@un.org.

Kirk L. Kroeker
Head of Publications

ON THE COVER



Mr. Mua'wiya Musa is pictured in the sound studio at his home in El Fasher North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



Children in Kuma Garadayat, North Darfur, peer through a school room window. Photo by Sojoud Elgarrai, UNAMID.

VOICES of Darfur

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Violence Reaffirms Need for Dialogue, Says Head of UNAMID

On 24 July 2013, addressing the United Nations Security Council, the Head of UNAMID said the security situation in Darfur remains volatile amid fighting between Sudanese Government forces and armed movements, a recent spate of attacks against peacekeepers and an upsurge in interethnic violence. “As we enter the tenth year of the conflict in Darfur, it is evident that the only solution...will be a political one,” said Joint Special Representative Mohamed Ibn Chambas, calling for intensified efforts to accelerate the peace process.

“While considerable progress was made throughout the years to bring down the initially great casualty numbers and to craft a peace process, much more remains to be done,” he said. “The parties to the conflict who have courageously embraced the path of peaceful settlement must be encouraged, supported and protected.”

Since the beginning of 2013, the renewed violence in Darfur has prompted more than 300,000

people to flee their villages and abandon their livelihoods, and the intertribal clashes have strained the ability of humanitarian organization to reach vulnerable families. Mr. Chambas said that the interethnic clashes are “particularly worrying,” as the increased militarization and proliferation of arms among civilian populations in Darfur has led to more deaths, injury and displacement than the fighting between the Government and non-signatory groups this year.

Also, the clashes have led to attacks against UNAMID peacekeepers. In one recent incident, on 13 July 2013, seven Tanzanian peacekeepers were killed and 17 other members of the Mission were injured in a roadside ambush. Mr. Chambas said Sudan has launched an investigation into the incident and an internal investigation is underway. “We are counting on the Government of Sudan to bring the perpetrators to justice,” he said.

Mr. Chambas told the Council that UNAMID and the Government are supporting lo-



On 14 July 2013 in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, UNAMID JSR Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Police Commissioner Hester Paneras and Deputy Force Commander Wynjones M. Kisamba visited peacekeepers recovering from the injuries they suffered in an ambush the day before, when seven peacekeepers were killed and 17 military and police personnel were wounded. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

cal mediation initiatives to facilitate reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. The JSR also reiterated the UN’s support for the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). The Sudanese Government and two armed movements have committed to the DDPD.

Mr. Chambas stated that during his negotiations with regional leaders, three heads of state—from Uganda, Tanzania

and Chad—agreed to persuade non-signatory groups to renounce violence and come to the negotiating table with the Government of Sudan, without preconditions. “Hopefully this would lead to formal talks with the Government of Sudan,” he said. “This conflict cannot, and will not, be won by force of arms, but can only be resolved through an all-inclusive political dialogue.”

UNAMID Deputy Meets El Sereif Displaced

UNAMID’s newly appointed Deputy Joint Special Representative, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, on 16 July 2013 visited El Sereif, North Darfur, to review the security situation there and interact with local leaders, internally displaced people and representatives from women’s and youth groups.

During the visit, he stressed the importance of reconciliation and peaceful conflict resolution between tribes in bringing about sustainable peace. The humanitarian situation in the El Sereif area and in North Dar-

fur followed from an outbreak of violence that took place on 5 January 2013 in Jebel Amir, resulting in a mass displacement of more than 100,000 people.

UNAMID bolstered its protection of civilians operations in the area by installing a temporary base in El Sereif and actively supported reconciliation efforts. In addition, the Mission provided a full spectrum of logistics support to deliver aid to the El Sereif area, including security escorts for humanitarian workers, enabling them to carry out their duties.



On 16 July 2013, UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative Joseph Mutaboba greets children upon arriving in El Sereif, North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

UN Peacekeeping Chief Visits Sudan

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, accompanied by the Joint Special Representative and Head of UNAMID, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, wrapped up a visit to Sudan on 5 July 2013.

During the visit, which began on 3 July, Mr. Ladsous travelled to El Daein, East Darfur, where he met with the Wali (Governor) and other members of local government, native administration and civil society leaders and also internally displaced people at the Neem camp. In Khartoum, Mr. Ladsous met with President Omar Al-Bashir and other senior Government officials.

Speaking to the press in Khartoum on 4 July, the USG expressed concern over the intensification of conflict in Darfur and its impact on the civilian

population. “We have witnessed a deterioration in the security situation,” the Head of UN peacekeeping said. “More people have been displaced—more than 300,000 since the beginning of this year—due mostly to tribal clashes.”

Mr. Ladsous called on all parties to cease hostilities. He praised the efforts of UNAMID peacekeepers to protect civilians, secure the delivery of aid and support the peace process. The USG reiterated the UN’s support for the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and urged the Government of Sudan and the non-signatory movements to cease hostilities and enter into negotiations immediately.

Regarding relations between Sudan and South Sudan, Mr. Ladsous called on the governments of both countries to fully implement the 27 Septem-



On 3 July 2013 in El Daein, East Darfur, Hervé Ladsous, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, is welcomed by the local community during his arrival at the Neem camp for internally displaced people. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

ber agreements and resolve all disputes through the bilateral mechanisms provided for in these accords.

Mr. Ladsous expressed concern over the security and humanitarian situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. He noted that a disagreement between the parties over mo-

dalities for humanitarian access was preventing the conduct of a campaign to vaccinate children. He urged the parties to that conflict to allow unhindered humanitarian access to people in need.

The USG’s visit to Sudan was part of a wider tour that included South Sudan and Mali. ■

Abu Karinka, East Darfur



On 18 August 2013, to address the needs of civilians affected in the East Darfur inter-communal clashes, UNAMID assisted in airlifting more than 300 civilians from El Daein, East Darfur, to Abu Karinka. On 21 August, the Mission transported representatives of the Rezeigat and Ma’alia tribes to Al Tawisha, North Darfur, to participate in the signing of an agreement to cease hostilities in East Darfur. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

Um Maraheik, North Darfur



On 24 July 2013, Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed teaches at the secondary school in Um Maraheik, North Darfur. The new school, built with the support of UNAMID, is waiting for additional funding so it can hire teachers. In the meantime, Mr. Mohamed works as an unpaid volunteer, and is the school's only teacher. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

UNAMID Commemorates Mandela Day with Community Service

On 18 July 2013, UNAMID joined the UN worldwide in celebrating Nelson Mandela International Day. As part of the day's activities, members of the South African contingent and other UNAMID personnel devoted 67 minutes to clean El Fasher Maternity and Gynecological Hospital. The hospital treats more than 600 patients each month.

UNAMID Deputy Commander, Mathew M. Kisamba, quoted Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for the day. "As we extend our best wishes to President Mandela on his 95th birthday, let us also give tangible meaning to our feelings of con-

cern by taking action on behalf of others," he said. "The heart of Nelson Mandela International Day is good works for people and the planet. Its theme—take action, inspire change—is meant to mobilize the human family to do more to build a peaceful, sustainable and equitable world. This is the best tribute we can pay to an extraordinary man who embodies the highest values of humanity."

The day, which commemorates the achievements of Nelson Mandela, especially the African leader's 67 years of fighting for human rights and social justice, was marked with military parades, cultural performances, songs and poetry. ❖



On 18 July 2013, a UNAMID peacekeeper cleans the delivery room of the Maternity and Gynecological Hospital in El Fasher, North Darfur, as part of the 67- Minute cleaning campaign on Nelson Mandela Day. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

UNAMID Launches Radio Serial Drama, Celebrates Youth Day

On 18 August 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID hosted an event to announce the launch of a new Radio Serial Drama, “Rakuba Aba Salih,” and to commemorate International Youth Day. A series of activities, including a march through El Fasher, theatrical performances and music concerts, were part of the day’s festivities. The events, which were held in and around the Al Zubeir Stadium in El Fasher, were organized by UNAMID in collaboration with the North Darfur National Youth Association.

UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (DJSR), Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, read the UN Secretary-General’s Youth Day message at the event. This year’s International Youth Day theme focused on urging youth-led organizations and other stakeholders to promote the rights of all young migrants and maximize the development potential of young people.

“Poverty, crowded and unsanitary living conditions and the challenges of finding decent employment are regular features of the migrant experience,” the DJSR said, quoting the Secretary-General’s message for the day. “These challenges are exacerbated by the current global economic and financial crisis. Migrants are also often accused by communities and politicians of taking jobs from local people, exposing them to further risk of discrimination. In other cases, young people left behind by migrating parents face psychological and social challenges and greater vulnerability.”

Mr. Mutaboba went on to emphasize that it is important to recognize the positive contribution young migrants make economically, socially and culturally. “Most work hard to earn a living and improve their circumstances,” he said. “The remittances they send to support families in their home countries are a ma-



On 18 August 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Ms. Majdah Elbasia, a Sudanese performer, sings during the celebration that marked International Youth Day and that launched UNAMID’s new Radio Serial Drama, “Rakuba Aba Salih.” Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

major contributor to economies worldwide.”

Also addressing those attending the event was Mr. Salih Ahmed El-Sheikh, Head of North Darfur’s National Youth Association. “Such an event provides an opportunity where a strong youth initiative can be created to address peace, security and development issues,” he said, calling for additional advocacy related to youth issues.

Similar celebration events were conducted across Darfur to commemorate International Youth Day and to launch UNAMID’s new Radio Serial Drama, which depicts Darfuris interacting and discussing issues of common concern. The new Radio Serial Drama is broadcast on Al-Salam Radio on frequency 98.0 MHz in Khartoum, and on frequency 7.2 MHz (41 metre on short-wave) in Darfur every Sunday. **U**

Zam Zam, North Darfur



On 15 July 2013, a woman stands in the firewood sales area in one of the markets in the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur. Firewood is an essential component of life for the people living in Darfur, as it is used daily for boiling water and for all forms of cooking. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

El Fasher, North Darfur



On 27 July 2013, in El Fasher, North Darfur, leaders of the Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes cheer after signing an agreement that addresses the conflict related to the dispute that erupted in January 2013 in Jebel Amir, resulting in the displacement of more than 100,000 people. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

UNAMID Force Commander Visits South Darfur

UNAMID Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Paul Ignace Mella, undertook a series of field visits from 4 to 7 August 2013 in South Darfur to assess the security situation in the area and to meet the troops deployed there. During the visit, he met community leaders and Government officials.

Force Commander Mella visited troops stationed in Nyala, Graidia and Ed Fursan in South Darfur and El Daein in East Darfur. The Force Commander received briefings on the current security situation, on ongoing operations and on current challenges faced by the peacekeepers working in those areas.

The Force Commander also visited the Tanzanian

Battalion, stationed in Khor Abeche, to express his condolences for the loss of the seven soldiers killed during an ambush on 13 July. He said that the seven peacekeepers will be remembered for their hard work, dedication and loyalty in their service and contribution to global peace. The Force Commander expressed his wishes that those wounded in the attack would be able to recover quickly.

UNAMID's Force Commander, who was appointed on 4 June 2013 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and African Union Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, arrived in Darfur on 1 August 2013. He succeeds Lt.



UNAMID's Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Paul Ignace Mella, who was appointed on 4 June 2013 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and African Union Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, arrived in Darfur on 1 August 2013. Photo by UNAMID.

Gen. Patrick Nyamvumba of Rwanda. Following his arrival, the Force Commander has taken similar trips to El Geneina, West Darfur, and Zalingei, Central Darfur. ▼

Peacekeepers Remain Committed Despite Challenges

From the front-line peacekeepers on patrol to the Force Commander, UNAMID's troops are focused, day in and day out, on carrying out the mandate of the Mission in Darfur.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

In every UN peacekeeping mission, uniformed military personnel are at the forefront of the operation. They are entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and observing the security situation, assisting in the promotion of peace and aiding in the implementation of any signed peace deal. Such assistance comes in many forms, not just physical presence and a show of strength. Other forms of assistance include confidence-building exercises designed to strengthen rule-of-law institutions and activities to help build economic mechanism that can help a population recover from long years of conflict.

Lt. Col. S. B. Gwaya is one of the military peacekeepers working in Darfur. He arrived recently to Khor Abeche, South Darfur, as part of the 875 member Tanzanian contingent serving there. Tanzania, as one of the troop-contributing countries for the Mission, has a full battalion deployed across South and East Darfur. Lt. Col. Gwaya typically begins each day at 4:30 a.m., when he engages in his physical exercise routine. Then he attends dawn prayers at 6:00 a.m., after which he has breakfast, which normally consists of a cup of tea and a loaf of bread.

When he first arrives in the office, he checks on the priorities for the day and receives his morning reports. He is briefed by his staff officers and commanders on the latest developments in the security situation during the previous 24 hours. Following the briefing, the Lt. Col. delegates tasks and meets with different contingent commanders, all as part of planning upcoming activities and responding to the latest security situation. Sometimes, he is requested to accompany either the Sector Commander or UNAMID's Force Commander, the top

military officer in the Mission, on operational visits to various parts of Darfur when the security situation requires it.

While this is Lt. Col. Gwaya's first peacekeeping operation, he brings to the Mission more than 20 years of military experience, like many of his counterparts in other sectors, all of whom are seasoned military professionals with years of experience working in their home countries or other peacekeeping operations. Prior to his deployment in Darfur, Lt. Col. Gwaya worked in Tanzania as a trainer. When asked about what his family thinks of him being so far from home and putting his life in harm's way, he points out that his family is already familiar with the demands of his career. "My family is aware of the nature of my job," he says. "When I was back in Tanzania, I travelled a lot, and sometimes for weeks and even months."

Lt. Col. Gwaya's soldiers, who are on call 24 hours a day, typically start their day by focusing on the task orders they receive from him. "Our troops are here to contribute to the restoration of security and stability, to reinforce peace and protect civilians under threat, as well as to contribute to development projects in the area," he says. "I am optimistic that one day there will be peace here."

Since being deployed to the Mission, Lt. Col. Gwaya's troops have conducted patrols in all the camps and towns in their area of responsibility to contribute to a stable security situation. In addition to these patrols, they have performed many humanitarian escorts. Without these escorts, the agencies and nongovernmental organisations working in Darfur would not be able to travel to the areas they need to visit to help those in need. As part of its core



mandate, UNAMID is tasked with creating the space in which these humanitarian actors can operate.

Travelling by vehicle or on foot, on bad roads and through difficult terrain, these Tanzanian peacekeepers not only monitor the area they patrol, but also interact with locals and listen to their concerns. They gather information on issues relating to food, healthcare, education and water, and they report their findings back at base.

This year, on 13 July, the Tanzanian troops were ambushed while conducting a patrol. The attack left seven peacekeepers dead and 17 others injured. "To help boost the morale of the troops after the attack, senior officers are accompanying the patrols," says Lt. Col. Gwaya. "We also get together in sporting activities with the



On 24 October 2012 in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID peacekeepers from Egypt participate in a parade march in the El Fasher stadium for United Nations Day. UNAMID, UN agencies and the people of Darfur gathered to commemorate the 67th anniversary of the UN with a special parade, cultural dances, peace songs and exhibitions to promote the principles of the organisation. Similar events were held throughout Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

troops to keep fit and maintain esprit de corps.”

Tanzania has contributed troops to several peacekeeping operations. Responding to recent criticism about the Mission not being able to protect its own peacekeepers, Lt. Col. Gwaya says that the Mission is not weak. But he does say there is a need to review the Mission’s mandate. “When the mandate was provided in 2007, the situation was different,” he says. “As long as things are changing, there is a need to review the mandate so that peacekeepers can better protect themselves and the civilians living here.”

He points out that, contrary to some of the criticism that has emerged in the press about the Mission’s capabilities, the troops here have been well trained and are

aware of the expectations that they must meet. “It is part of the job,” he says. “We are here to assist in maintaining peace and stability.”

UN Security Council resolution 1769 of July 2007 authorized UNAMID to be 26,000 peacekeepers, broken down into 19,555 troops, 360 military observers and liaison officers, 3,772 police advisors, and 2,660 police officers, with the remainder being civilians. At that time, the authorized civilian component was set up to consist of 1,548 international staff, 561 UN volunteers, and 3,437 national personnel. In July 2012, UN Security Council resolution 2063 decreased the authorized size of the military and police components.

Today, even with the current downsizing underway, UNAMID remains a large

peacekeeping operation, with close to 40 countries providing troops to the Mission. Those countries contributing the most troops to UNAMID are Nigeria, Rwanda, Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal. More than 30 countries currently contribute police advisors and police officers to the Mission. The top police contributors are Bangladesh, Nigeria, Jordan, Nepal and Ghana. The rest of the peacekeepers here—the civilian personnel—come from more than 125 different countries.

From the front-line peacekeepers on patrol to the Force Commander and his staff, UNAMID’s troops are focused, day in and day out, on carrying out the mandate of the Mission in Darfur. In each of Darfur’s States, there is a military Sector Commander overseeing operations in the State. These Sector Commanders reports directly to UNAMID’s Force Commander. The Sector Commander in North Darfur is Brig. Gen. Tedla Gebremichael, who is from Ethiopia. This is his first peacekeeping operation. Brig. Gen. Gebremichael arrived in UNAMID in April 2011 and oversees six battalions from Ethiopia, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa. In addition, he is in charge of the Nepalese Special Forces team stationed in North Darfur and also the Kabkabiya Level II Hospital, which is staffed by peacekeepers from Mongolia.

Brig. Gen. Gebremichael’s official day begins when he attends the Force Commander’s morning briefing to discuss and review operational activities in his area of responsibility. He also attends an operational meeting to review activities at all team sites in North Darfur. During these meetings, in addition to determining the most effective way to respond to the current security situation, the military person-

On 14 July 2013 in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, UNAMID military personnel from Tanzania are pictured inside one of the Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) that was visibly damaged after being ambushed the day before, when seven peacekeepers were killed and 17 military and police personnel were wounded. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 10 December 2012 in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, Mongolian officers based at the Mission's team site there prepare for rotation. The Mongolian medical team working in Kabkabiya consists of 68 personnel—34 men and 34 women—who operate the hospital that assists 20 people from the local community every day, in addition to providing medical care to UNAMID staff. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

nel review communications and training needs and determine how to enhance the deployment of the troops in the implementation of the Mission's mandate most effectively.

The Sector Commander explains that, since his arrival in 2011, he has encountered several major challenges. As one example, he cites the 2012 displacement of a roughly 25,000 civilians living in the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). In August 2012, a series of violent attacks forced the civilians living in the Kassab camp to flee from their homes and seek safe haven in the North Darfur town of Kutum. The majority of these doubly displaced IDPs who took shelter in Kutum's open areas did not have access to basic services such as clean water, food, sanitation facilities and health care, leading to the need for immediate humanitarian assistance.

The unrest in the area began on 1 August 2012 when the Kutum commissioner of the Alwaha district and his driver were killed by armed men. Later in the day, the official's vehicle, which was stolen during the attack, was recovered by Sudanese security agents 2 kilometres from Kassab. On the same day, armed men attacked Kassab, looted the market, houses and other facilities, burned down the Sudanese Police station in the camp, killed four people (three civilians and one police officer) and injured six others.

In response to the Kassab violence, UNAMID began conducting 24-hour pa-



“We have an obligation from our countries and to the African Union and United Nations to serve and contribute to the restoration of stability and lasting peace here in Darfur.”

—Brig. Gen. Tedla Gebremichael

trols around the camp, and the Nepalese Special Forces and Indonesian Police reinforced the South African troops already stationed at the Kutum team site. UNAMID erected temporary structures and observation posts inside Kassab to develop a stronger physical presence there. At the same time, the Mission enhanced security in the nearby Fata Borno IDP camp.

In addition to UNAMID troops working around the clock to provide enhanced security to those living in the camps and surrounding villages, the Mission, together with UN agencies and international and national nongovernmental organizations, worked to address the humanitarian situation. The UN World Food Programme distributed food rations. UNICEF and



On 14 July 2013 in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, UNAMID Joint Special Representative Mohamed Ibn Chambas visits the Mission's base in the area following an incident in which seven peacekeepers were killed and 17 military and police personnel were wounded in an ambush. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

ians to flee southward toward the villages of Kabkabiya, Saraf Omra and El Sereif.

In addition to providing support to the mediation process to help bring an end to the dispute, UNAMID delivered more than 56,000 kilograms of humanitarian aid, by land and air, to thousands of civilians who were displaced. The aid consisted of nonfood items such as plastic tarps, sleeping mats, blankets and water-purification equipment. UNAMID strengthened its protection presence in the area by increasing its number of daily patrols, and continued its mediation work to bring about a peaceful solution to the tribal feud.

The negotiations led to an initial ceasefire agreement signed on 18 January in Saraf Omra. However, as mediation efforts began to move forward, the fighting in North Darfur resumed, resulting in additional casualties and displacements. The Jebel Amir issue is one of many such tribal conflicts that UNAMID has been working to help resolve by directly supporting mediation initiatives and by providing an increase in the number of patrols in the areas where conflict has broken out. Brig. Gen. Gebremichael notes that, currently, the situation with the tribes in North Darfur remains tense, and points out that UNAMID military in the area continues to meet on a regular basis with community leaders to help prevent an escalation of violence.

Across Darfur, UNAMID peacekeepers like Lt. Col. Gwaya and Brig. Gen. Gebremichael are working together with their colleagues on similar pressing issues. UNAMID's Maj. Tumsifu Semana, a Rwandan Operations Officer stationed in North Darfur, plans patrols, provides logistics support and works on civil-military activities all in the interest of helping to bring peace to this troubled region. "Our troops work together with officers from different countries, reaching out to remote communities on confidence-building patrols, facilitating delivery of humanitarian aid and promoting the peace process," says Maj.

its local partners repaired damaged water sources, collected garbage and trained IDPs on health issues. With the increased presence of peacekeepers in the area, and along with the assistance of the humanitarian agencies, Kassab residents began to return to their temporary homes in the camp.

One month after the tragic incidents in and around Kassab, more than 80 per cent of residents had returned, while a small number of people, mostly the elderly and the injured, remained in Kutum. Many families lost all their personal belongings in the attacks, including blankets, mosquito nets, kitchen utensils and clothing. Schools were looted, and even books and water tanks were missing.

"We did everything to contain the situ-

ation, including meet with local Government officials in the area and community leaders," says Brig. Gen. Gebremichael. "The Mission also deployed on a permanent basis the Nepalese Special Forces to the camp. Those troops have now been replaced by the South African soldiers who are stationed near the camp."

Another major challenge Brig. Gen. Gebremichael cites is the tribal conflict that broke out in the Jebel Amir area of North Darfur over the ownership of a gold mine. Clashes between the tribes in the area led to an estimated 100 deaths and 100,000 displaced. The fighting erupted on 5 January and resulted not only in casualties, but also in the looting and burning of nearby villages, forcing thousands of civil-



On 24 July 2013 in Um Maraheik, North Darfur, a UNAMID peacekeeper converses with students. This school was built in December 2012 as part of UNAMID's community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs) programme. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Semana, who arrived to Darfur in January 2013 as part of his second tour here.

Maj. Semana previously served with UNAMID in 2010 and 2011. As part of his work as an Operations Officer, he conducts training sessions on military tactics and does briefings on the current deployments and conditions in Darfur. Serving in Darfur, he says, has brought him closer to other people from around the world and in particular to Darfuris. "I now understand their needs," he says. "I look forward to continuing to learn about the different cultures here, because previously I only knew this region through media reports."

To build confidence in UNAMID among the people of Darfur—an essential component in the Mission being able to carry out its core mandate—the Rwandan troops have engaged in quick-impact projects designed to address the needs of the local communities as they struggle toward economic recovery from long years of conflict. In one of these projects, the Rwandans have worked with IDPs to help them build fuel-efficient stoves. So far, the troops have been conducting training on how to make these stoves in the Al Salaam and Abu Shouk IDP camps. "More than 150 stoves have been constructed since May 2013," says Maj. Semana.

Despite many such development and recovery projects designed to help improve

the situation in Darfur, the Mission has experienced many operational challenges. Maj. Semana notes that, since his troops arrived in Darfur, they have been faced with challenges in coordinating their movements with Government authorities. Maj. Semana says that, although it has not been easy accessing certain areas, the peacekeepers try their best to coordinate with Government authorities to ensure access to areas where there are people in need. "We are here to help protect the people, to enforce peace in the region," he says, noting that the issue of movement is one that has been raised repeatedly by the Mission's leadership in regular meetings with Government officials.

Another operational issue, says Maj. Semana, is the weather in Darfur. The Rwandese peacekeeper points out that his troops have adjusted to Darfur's harsh environment even though it is quite different from Rwanda. Changes in weather can happen abruptly in Darfur, with no warning. "Before we came to Sudan, we were told all about the sand storms, the extreme heat and the seasonal flooding," he says. "We knew about the difficult climate in advance, but we came here to contribute to this noble cause."

For his part, Lt. Col. Gwaya is of the same opinion about the weather in Darfur. "Our soldiers have come to the Mission well equipped with the necessary combat

gear to operate in bad weather, including during the rainy season as well as during dust storms," he says, noting that as part of the typical rotations in such a large peacekeeping operation, soldiers come and go every month, with the peacekeeping work in Darfur leaving a lasting impression on all of them, especially when it comes to the weather and the security situation.

Since UNAMID initially deployed in early 2008, the Mission has suffered several fatalities in Darfur. More than 44 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty. Regardless of the security constraints, the hindrances in conducting operational activities and even the loss of life, the Mission's peacekeepers remain committed to the mandate to provide protection to civilians in Darfur, facilitate humanitarian assistance and create a stable environment in which peace can take root.

Each day, across Darfur, the Mission's troops carry out dozens of patrols and work to address the root causes of the conflict by interacting with the local communities, working on quick-impact projects and planning development programmes. The peacekeepers here typically operate according to a rotation where they work for a period of nine months. Others spend one year here, then cycle back to their home countries and are replaced by fresh troops.

Lt. Col. Gwaya says he will remain in UNAMID for six more months and then head back to Tanzania where the country's military leaders will decide on his next assignment, which might be to another UN mission. He says that, regardless of where he ends up, he will always remember his time in Darfur and considers it a privilege to have served here. "As my first UN operation, I will remember Darfur according to the suffering of the people and their means of livelihood, as well as the challenges we have faced here as peacekeepers," he says.

Ultimately, while the peacekeepers here are risking their lives while working in a difficult environment and against numerous challenges, they remain dedicated to contributing to peace and security in the region. "We have an obligation from our countries and to the African Union and United Nations to serve and contribute to the restoration of stability and lasting peace here in Darfur," says Brig. Gen. Gebremichael. ■

Mediating Tribal Conflicts in Darfur

While the main fighting between the armed movements and the Government continues to draw the attention away from the tribal conflicts, this year those conflicts have escalated and have become a more significant factor in the region.

BY RETTA REDDY

In 2013, Darfur's tribal conflicts have spiraled out of control, leading to an estimated displacement of more than 300,000 people. In one recent example, on 3 April 2013 the Salamat and the Meseriya in East Darfur entered into conflict as a result of an alleged theft of a motorbike and a related death. Local authorities attempted to intervene as additional members of the Salamat and Meseriya began to move from Chad and South Darfur to support their tribe members in East Darfur. This conflict rapidly escalated and placed an enormous strain on UNAMID in protecting the civilians caught in the middle. It also created a dire humanitarian situation resulting from large numbers of civilians displaced.

A committee consisting of native administration leaders, community representatives and members of East Darfur's legislative council assisted in the effort to contain the situation and initiate reconciliation. Despite an interim cessation-of-hostilities agreement signed on 7 April, more clashes took place between the two tribes. Other tribes associated with the Meseriya joined against the Salamat. UNAMID mobilized a mediation and reconciliation conference in Zalingei, Central Darfur, in early June. The conference led to a formal peace agreement signed on 3 July.

While one of the primary issues preventing peace in Darfur continues to be the fighting between the armed movements and the Government of Sudan, tribal clashes continue to be a major problem that, if left unaddressed, has the potential to engulf Darfur in violence. The tribes involved in these conflicts are interconnected across Darfur, creating a situation in which a tribal dispute in one location can quickly escalate into massive conflict throughout Darfur.

As an example of this interconnectedness, the June 2013 standoff between the Beni

Hussein and the Abbala (Northern Reizegat) in El Sereif, North Darfur, saw both groups marshaling members from the length and breadth of Darfur, who rode in to support their tribe members in El Sereif. The clash between the Beni Hussein and the Northern Reizegat had begun in January 2013 over gold mining rights in Jebel Amir, and ended initially with a peace agreement signed on 17 January. That peace agreement was short-lived. Clashes began again in March, and displaced tens of thousands of civilians.

A reconciliation process that began in March with the support of UNAMID and the Governor of North Darfur resulted in a peace agreement on 27 July. Although the agreement was significant, it did not include all clans of the Northern Reizegat, and time will tell whether it will last. Interestingly, this agreement has a clause prohibiting parties to call in reinforcements from other tribes and states.

An independent mediation initiative worth noting was started by Sheikh Musa Hilal Abdallah in North Darfur on 18 August during a peace conference held between the Reizegat and Benni Hussein tribes. The participants formed an inter-tribal council designed to ensure peaceful coexistence, with 10 members of each tribe in the area serving on the council. Those attending the conference agreed that certain localities would be free from tribal disputes and be declared zones of peace.

While such developments are promising, there has been no lull in 2013's tribal conflicts. On 8 August, clashes erupted between the Ma'alia and Reizegat tribes in East Darfur. The tense situation initially developed as a response to alleged cattle rustling. The fighting later spread, with two serious clashes on 12 and 13 August that reportedly resulted in hundreds of casualties and the displacement of an estimated 20,000 households. UNAMID played a sig-

nificant role in the peace process following those clashes. On 22 August, the Reizegat and Ma'alia tribes signed an agreement to cease hostilities.

The importance of continued mediation and reconciliation efforts cannot be overstated. UNAMID maintains direct contact and close collaboration with Government and DRA Ministers and other parties to obtain updated information and to build closer relationships with all stakeholders. While the main fighting between the armed movements and the Government continues to draw the attention away from the tribal conflicts, this year those conflicts have escalated and have become a more significant factor in the region.

The way forward now is to address the root causes of the conflict. UNAMID's Civil Affairs section is scheduled to hold a series of workshops, seminars and meetings with a broad spectrum of Darfuris to discuss ways to resolve the tribal conflicts and support peace-building efforts. Because land and the management of natural resources are at the core of most of the tribal conflicts, the Darfur Land Commission will participate to identify issues and the possible solutions to resolve the conflicts.

In addition to addressing the root causes of the conflict, these meetings will offer an opportunity to cultivate a better understanding of the Mission's work and the principles of impartial peacekeeping. In addition, they will serve as platforms where UNAMID staff will be able to strengthen ties with community leaders and local authorities to build better future working relationships in the interest of preventing future tribal disputes in this conflict-torn region of the world. ■

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HUMAN RIGHTS



An Impact-Oriented Approach to Human Rights

UNAMID's Human Rights Officers not only support victims of human rights violations, but also take an active role in capacity-building activities and awareness programmes, and work directly with Government institutions and local partners to strengthen justice and the rule of law.

BY EMADELDIN RIJAL

In the early years of the Darfur conflict, which began more than one decade ago, the situation on the ground was so sensitive and volatile that it was difficult to address allegations related to human rights violations openly, and in particular those related to vulnerable groups, such as women and children. In recent years, however, and thanks in part to UNAMID's work and the work

of its partners here, there have been several notable developments in the approach to these issues.

Violence against women and other human rights issues are now openly discussed in Government legislative meetings, in civil society workshops across Darfur and in capacity-building training sessions conducted by UNAMID for various Government

institutions. In addition, many of these human rights themes are now consistently brought up in discussions in special committees—consisting of community leaders, Government representatives and other stakeholders—in all areas of Darfur.

Mr. Christian Mikala, one of UNAMID's Senior Human Rights Officers, says this coordinated and collaborative effort to



In El Geneina, West Darfur, UNAMID Human Rights Officer Jelaleldin Abdulrahman gives the keys to a new office to a representative of the El Geneina Bar Association, Mr. Muneir Ab-baker. The facility, which was built as part of a quick-impact project sponsored by UNAMID, is used as a temporary office for itinerant lawyers and as a legal aid centre for law practitioners and those needing consultation. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“Dilapidated and run-down buildings have a direct psychological impact on the staff working there. Human rights are more likely to be respected in environments where legal professionals and police can take pride in their good work.”

—Christian Mikala

for Crimes in Darfur has begun its work, as stipulated in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). All of these mechanisms, says Mr. Mikala, are geared toward addressing the plight of victims and preventing human rights violations.

UNAMID’s Human Rights section has been engaging regularly with these institutional actors and with the lawyers and paralegals that work in these institutions to address human rights issues. In addition to this capacity-building work, UNAMID’s Human Rights Officers monitor the progress of these institutions related to specific human rights cases. “We observe trials, and make sure they are impartial and transparent,” says Mr. Mikala, explaining that the section not only monitors the rights of the victims, but also the rights of the perpetrators.

UNAMID’s Human Rights Officers do not merely observe and report. Instead, they take an active role in education programmes and work directly with local partners to strengthen institutions, raise awareness and build capacity. While the Government of Sudan is ultimately responsible for ensuring that its citizens are not subjected to human rights violations and abuses, UNAMID has been working with law enforcement officials, judicial officers, police departments, civil society leaders, community members and other stakeholders so victims have access to existing forms of redress.

“Our primary objective is to effectively contribute to the protection of the rights of all Darfuris in the hope that human rights vi-

olations and abuses will increasingly become a thing of the past,” says Mr. Mikala, who explains that the approach of the Human Rights section is driven by the core mandate of UNAMID in its work to protect civilians. For example, the Mission’s work at the political and local levels through mediation, conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives, and its work on gender issues, rule of law, child protection and good governance are all measures to create a stable environment that provides protection to civilians.

In this sense, the efforts of UNAMID’s Human Rights Officers to promote human rights are designed to contribute to the ability of Darfuris to enjoy their economic, social and cultural freedoms. Consistent with this approach, the Human Rights section regularly undertakes work to help make human rights a key aspect of the humanitarian agenda and the political process, including as that process relates to the implementation of the DDPD. Beyond this strategic approach, the Mission’s Human Rights section has been conducting work designed to inject much-needed support into the local justice and police systems.

Across Darfur, in more than 10 years of conflict, infrastructure has been systematically damaged or destroyed, and families have lost their homes and livelihoods. Many Darfur communities lack water and other basic services. The basic services that do exist are either overstretched or are collapsing due to lack of maintenance. Many of Darfur’s police and justice buildings have been damaged or are in a state of disrepair.

address human right issues signals a positive shift. “Although the human rights situation is still tense and, despite many challenges, we are seeing an improvement as far as institution-building is concerned across Darfur,” he says. “A development worth noting is the establishment of institutions that are addressing human rights issues.”

Mr. Mikala is referring to mechanisms such as the Government’s Family and Child Protection Units and the human rights forums operating in some Darfur states. Each of the five states of Darfur has either established or is in the process of setting up its own committee for combatting violence against women. The National Human Rights Commission is planning to open branches in Darfur and a Special Prosecutor



In El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudanese Police Col. Abdulmalik Hassan and Lt. Col. Mohammed Abbas inspect the cells of the El Geneina detention centre that was recently renovated by a UNAMID-funded quick-impact project. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“Dilapidated and run-down buildings have a direct psychological impact on the staff working there,” says Mr. Mikala. “Human rights are more likely to be respected in environments where legal professionals and police can take pride in their good work.”

Operating according to the theory of the psychological benefit of an environment that is conducive to professionalism, UNAMID is providing support to help improve the working environments for justice-oriented institutions. For instance, the Mission has worked to rehabilitate the detention centre of the police station in El Geneina, West Darfur, and police offices in El Geneina’s surrounding localities. This rehabilitation work is ongoing, with many more police stations scheduled for much-needed maintenance. The rehabilitations typically include structural repair and painting, along with other work to restore the offices to their original pristine condition.

Police officials in West Darfur have praised the work of the Mission and say they are looking forward to seeing more opportunities for collaboration. “I believe that the cooperation between West Darfur

police and UNAMID is very fruitful and constructive,” says Mr. Abubakar Abulrazig Hassan, the Director of West Darfur’s Police Division. He points out that such projects ultimately contribute to justice and security for the residents of the area.

To implement this repair and rehabilitation work, UNAMID’s Human Rights section has relied on the Mission’s quick-impact projects (QIPs) programme, which provides funding for local implementing partners, who work directly with the beneficiaries to ensure successful completion of the projects. Across Darfur, UNAMID’s many QIPs are designed to build confidence in the peace process by enhancing the relationship between the Mission and local communities and by fostering early socioeconomic recovery. These QIPs are small-scale, each amounting to US\$25,000, and are designed to make a measurable impact in the communities where they are applied. The funding threshold for each project increased recently to US\$50,000.

To enhance efficiency, the mission decentralised the decision-making process related to managing the QIPs to directly

address the needs of the communities throughout Darfur and improve the living conditions of the people in the region. The Mission and its implementing partners have completed more than 500 such projects across Darfur. Projects have included school buildings, health centre rehabilitations, agricultural training, women’s education, water programmes, waste facility construction and a broad variety of other projects designed to benefit Darfuris.

In addition to working with the QIPs programme to rehabilitate police stations in Darfur, the Mission’s Human Rights section has worked to strengthen other rule-of-law institutions. The creation of a Bar Association facility in West Darfur is one example. As an institution, the Bar Association helps to train new lawyers and conduct law-related events. In addition to being the home for training activities and events, the Bar Association’s new centre, built as a quick-impact project, is used as a temporary office for itinerant lawyers and as a legal aid centre for law practitioners and those needing consultation.

“The Bar Association centre is a place where lawyers and paralegals can interact with each other and the community,” says Mr. Muneir Abbaker, a Bar Association representative who explains that the new centre built with funding provided from UNAMID is helping to bring the community together in a way that contributes to justice.

Previously, members of the Bar Association had rented houses and offices to host their activities. But now they have become owners of a facility designed to ensure the sustainability of their work. “The West Darfur Bar Association’s new centre is a reference point where people can find basic services of legal aid as well as basic advice,” says Mr. Mikala, who points out that this new facility is contributing to and enhancing the professionalism, dignity and respect of the Bar Association members and the people its members serve.

When the project finished, UNAMID’s Human Rights team handed it over officially to the Bar Association representatives, who were involved in the process from the beginning and have taken complete ownership of the new facility. As with other projects in the QIPs programme, the beneficiaries are expected to maintain the new facility so it can be serviceable for years to come. “Involving beneficiaries at the conceptualisation phase of a project and making them part of the implementation process increases their sense of ownership and secures the effective use of a finalised project in the medium and long term,” says Mr. Mikala.

In a project designed to have a similar psychological impact and ultimately benefit the local community, UNAMID’s Human Rights section applied a quick-impact project to completely rebuild a detention centre in El Geneina. Under the Sudan Criminal Law Act, any person accused of a crime is detained and is deemed innocent until he or she is proven to be guilty. During detention, the accused are entitled to basic services. Recognising the need for a new detention centre in El Geneina, the Human Rights section worked on a quick-impact project to revamp the existing detention building.

The project consisted of the complete renovation of one wing of the Medina detention centre, including the installation of a new septic tank and drainage system to provide a more hygienic environment. The facility now has a water tank and bet-



In El Geneina, West Darfur, a Sudanese Police Officer walks outside the courtyard of the new El Geneina detention centre that was recently renovated and expanded through the work of a UNAMID-funded quick-impact project. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“Our primary objective is to effectively contribute to the protection of the rights of all Darfuris in the hope that human rights violations and abuses will increasingly become a thing of the past.”

—Christian Mikala

ter toilets, and can be easily cleaned and maintained. In addition, the work included the construction of a meeting area that can accommodate individuals who are seeking police services or visiting detainees.

The Director of the West Darfur Police Division says that the overall impact of this rehabilitation work on the detention centre is significant. “El Geneina’s police office now is able to carry out its work in relation to the detention of persons until they are brought to trial and until investigations are completed in a way that protects the human dignity and rights of the accused,” he says.

Along with these construction projects to improve the working conditions of rule-of-law professionals, UNAMID’s Human Rights Officers have been providing training courses on criminal investigation, gender-based violence, child protection and family-related issues. Such training sessions are designed to impart knowledge and skills to participants who deal with cases of human rights violations and in accordance with

international standards. Furnishing the participants with this kind of information is designed to help ensure their ability to promote human rights in their respective communities.

As part of this capacity-building approach, UNAMID not only works with those who administer justice and are part of rule-of-law institutions but also works directly with prisoners serving terms for various offenses. An example of this is when UNAMID organised a “prison social week” at the Shalla Federal Prison in El Fasher, North Darfur.

The week-long event, which was facilitated by UNAMID’s Rule of Law section in collaboration with the North Darfur Prisons and Reformatory Administration and the United Nations Development Programme, focused on raising awareness about the ways prisons can promote peace through social reform. Cultural activities, sports events and music concerts during the week drew crowds and helped raise awareness about the process of rehabilitating offenders and



A representative of the Bar Association in El Geneina, West Darfur, Mr. Muneir Abbaker, is pictured in a new facility built as part of a quick-impact project sponsored by UNAMID and facilitated by the Mission's Human Rights section. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

preparing them for reintegration into their communities by instilling in them a sense of personal responsibility.

In his address to the inmates who had gathered during the opening ceremony at the start of the week-long programme, Mr. Khalil Adam, the North Darfur Minister of Social Affairs, stated that to rehabilitate inmates, concerted effort must be made to address the problems and challenges the prisoners face in their communities. Modern prisons focus less on the punitive aspects of the inmate's sentences and more on rehabilitation and reform.

This approach in prisons is the kind of full-spectrum strategy that each section of the Mission is applying to its work in the field. For example, in most peacekeeping operations, the process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) works within the framework of a comprehensive peace agreement to disarm combatants and help them find new life as valuable and contributing members of society. When

there is no comprehensive peace agreement in place, as is the case in Darfur, DDR efforts focus on community-oriented programmes designed to set the stage for formal DDR activities, fostering trust at local levels and supporting programmes to move the peace process steadily forward.

The DDPD has not yet been signed by all armed movements, making comprehensive DDR activities impossible. However, UNAMID's DDR section has been working through the framework of what has come to be known as second-generation DDR, which offers different strategy and policy options that rely on unique approaches considered more effective for specific contexts. Rather than focusing on formal DDR activities, second-generation DDR takes a more organic approach in focusing on peace and security at the community level, and ensuring the involvement of these communities in the peace process.

As one part of this second-generation approach to support peace in Darfur at the

community level, UNAMID's DDR section has been implementing a violence-reduction strategy that has taken several forms in practice, most notably in community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs). These community projects are designed to support the efforts of the Government in addressing the needs of at-risk youth and other vulnerable groups in communities and in camps for displaced people. The projects focus not only on building vocational skills, and in many cases facilitating infrastructure development, but also on fostering reconciliation across Darfur.

The CLIPs conducted across Darfur are designed to address issues associated with large groups of at-risk young people who lack employment opportunities and thus may turn to armed movements or criminal behaviour to earn a living. The education system in Darfur, while steadily improving following years of conflict that damaged or destroyed basic infrastructure, does not yet have sufficient facilities or offer enough programmes to meet the needs of all the young Darfuris requiring vocational training beyond primary and secondary school. Competition over access to the services that are offered has been a source of tension that CLIPs are designed to address.

Since the commencement of the programme in July 2012, UNAMID's DDR section has implemented 17 CLIPs in 14 different localities throughout Darfur, engaging more than 2,300 young people. More CLIPs are scheduled to be implemented in the upcoming months, and more young people will receive much-needed vocational training.

In the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement, and in this extremely complex political environment, UNAMID's various sections are all undertaking similar work designed to create an environment that will be conducive to a lasting peace. The full-spectrum approach to human rights undertaken by the Mission's Human Rights Officers across Darfur is already having a measurable impact. "Ultimately, this full-spectrum approach that we undertake with our local and international partners, and with the Government of Sudan, is building a solid foundation upon which a lasting and durable peace can be built," says Mr. Mikala. "Only in the context of a stable and lasting peace can human rights truly flourish." ■

“Although the human rights situation is still tense and, despite many challenges, we are seeing an improvement as far as institution-building is concerned across Darfur. A development worth noting is the establishment of institutions that are addressing human rights issues.”

—Christian Mikala

Border Trade Contributing to Local Recovery

Darfur's border towns and trading hubs have been affected by several factors in recent years, most notably the secession of South Sudan and the resulting border disputes that temporarily shut down trade routes in East Darfur.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA



In El Geneina, West Darfur, traders rest under their truck near the customs office near the border. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

The economic downturn in Sudan, which has taken its toll on businesses in Darfur, has resulted in rising prices that have broadly affected traders and consumers in the region. The formation of South Sudan more than two years ago and the ensuing disputes over oil rights have deeply affected the economies on both sides of the border, leading to inflation, austerity measures and protests. Exacerbating the downturn's impact in Darfur are several other factors, including the general security situation, less than bountiful harvests and the temporary closing of border trade routes.

Mr. Ishag Abdulrahman, one of the several hundred border-traders living in East Darfur, has been working in this business for 13 years, selling food items, fuel and other goods in what is now South Sudan. Each week, Mr. Abdulrahman and his fellow El Daein traders depart East Darfur

on trucks destined for the south. During the rainy season, they must sometimes replace their trucks with carts and donkeys, enabling the traders to pass their goods over difficult parts of the muddy roads.

“For centuries, trade has been the lifeblood of the economy in East Darfur,” says Mr. Abdulrahman. “This includes cross-border trade between Darfur and neighbouring countries in livestock, and in commodities such as gum, cereal and other items.”

The Commissioner of El Daein, Mr. Ali Adam, is a former merchant himself and also the former Head of Commerce for El Daein. He says his role now as Commissioner is to lead the community and provide services for the people of East Darfur, especially as those services help the people of East Darfur continue their age-old traditions of trade with the south.

The Commissioner explains that

cross-border commerce goes to the very heart of the communities in and around El Daein, and affects many of the area's families, whose livelihoods depend on the free flow of goods both ways across the border. Recognizing the importance of trade in the area, the Government of Sudan has focused on developing infrastructure to make life easier for the traders. “Our Government has been supporting cross-border trade by rehabilitating the roads,” says the Commissioner, noting that East Darfur serves as an important hub for trade with South Sudan, Chad, and Central African Republic.

“East Darfur serves as the main trade gate for all Darfur states,” he explains. “Goods are sent from other regions to El Daein and beyond.” Some of the trade happens at the villages located between El Daein and South Sudan, but the big trad-

ers head all the way down to the border in a journey that takes a long time by truck and even longer by donkey. Traders such as Mr. Abdulrahman typically cross the border about seven to eight times during the rainy season alone, using their trucks to go as far as they can.

“People sometimes still use donkeys for the whole journey, which would take between 10 to 15 days from the trade area in East Darfur to Awil, South Sudan,” he says.

Before the independence of South Sudan, people living in and around El Daein relied mainly on barter. Mr. Abdulrahman says it was difficult to sell goods for cash because people simply did not have it, so he and other traders would barter their items for food and animals, which could then be sold in El Daein. After the independence of South Sudan, this situation began to change. Rural communities began to use currency, but there was a new challenge in that the new South Sudanese currency was not accepted in Darfur. “After selling their goods, traders exchange the South Sudanese currency at forex exchange points,” says Mr. Didan Mohammed, another trader.

Shifting away from the barter system to a currency system created a significant change in the way these traders conduct their business. Now that South Sudan is an independent country, determining the community-level impact in El Daein of the change from a largely inside-country trade system to one that is now international won’t be possible for perhaps years to come. But beyond these changes, the traders working the border have faced much larger issues recently. Following South Sudan seceding from Sudan, border disputes about oil, territory and other issues brought both countries to the brink of war.

As a result, Sudan closed much of the 2,000-kilometre border in 2011, affecting the traders and communities on both sides of the line. Traders were forced to comply with the law and cease their movements, although, reportedly, some still used alternative routes to carry their goods back and forth.

To help address the situation, the African Union appointed a high-level panel of experts to produce a nonbinding opinion on how the disputes should be resolved and to facilitate negotiations on oil, security, citizenship, assets and the border. An



In El Geneina, West Darfur, Mr. Yassir Mohamed, a trader who regularly exports products to Chad, waits at the customs office. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

agreement, signed in 2012, indicates that maintaining trade relations between the two countries is important for the communities on both sides of the border. Those living in what is now South Sudan were accustomed to purchasing essential commodities from Darfur, such as grain and flour. Closing the border affected not only the traders themselves and their families and communities in Darfur, but also the prices of the goods in both countries.

The September 2012 agreement signed between Sudan and South Sudan resolved some of the issues between the countries, making it likely for relations to normalize and border trade to resume. In March 2013, both countries agreed on a timetable for the full implementation of all the elements of the agreement signed in September 2012. The two states agreed to develop a border-management approach to regulate the flow of people, goods and services and to manage security in a way designed to reduce conflict. The states also agreed to promote trade across the border.

In April 2013, the President of Sudan travelled to Juba, South Sudan, to meet with the South Sudanese President and discuss issues to defuse the tensions between the two nations, normalize relations and reopen 10 crossing points along their joint border. Another good sign for traders and their communities was the agreement between Sudan and South Sudan to withdraw their forces from the shared border

and establish a demilitarized border zone.

The two nations also agreed to resume cross-border oil flow and take steps to defuse the tension that has plagued them since South Sudan seceded from Sudan in July 2011. Despite much progress, both countries in recent months have traded accusations over rebel support and have failed to agree on oil revenues and specific border demarcations. While the politics continue to be tense, traders in El Daein are now expressing cautious optimism that unfettered trade will be able to resume.

“We would like the agreement signed to be implemented on the ground, so both countries can continue to maintain trade and mutual relations,” says Mr. Abdulrahman.

Much like the trade across the border in East Darfur, there are other trade points in Darfur, most notably in Malha, North Darfur, and El Geneina, West Darfur. While Malha is one of Darfur’s most popular tourist destinations, it is active year-round with traders coming from bordering countries. The young members of the Midob tribe—the main tribe in the area—are known to seek their fortunes in other areas, working jobs in Libyan border cities or trading in Egypt to bring back goods to their home community.

“The Midob people take their livestock to Libyan and Egyptian markets for sale, and return with other products that are not available here in Malha,” says Mr. Ismail Amin, Malha’s Commissioner.

Mr. Amin explains that these interac-

tions enrich the Midob with an understanding of current economic and political affairs, locally and abroad. He says that, through these exchanges, it is common for Midob to become successful business owners, investing their profits into livestock expansion and building new residential accommodations in the town, ultimately benefitting the entire community. While the people of Malha are living peaceful lives, the area has not been without conflict. However, UNAMID carries out regular patrols in and around Malha to ensure protection for the Midob and its traders.

Another international trade up is on the west side of Darfur. The city of El Geneina serves as a key trade point with Chad. Following years of confrontation and diplomatic disputes between Sudan and Chad, both nations have agreed to mend their relations and enhance their international trade. In the past, Chad used to import goods such as cigarettes, tobacco, shoes, soap, sorghum, salt and other amenities directly from Sudan. In turn, Sudan would purchase goods, mostly cosmetics, from Chad. As a result of agreements signed between the two nations aimed at normalizing relations, officials from Chad and Sudan have worked to remove trade barriers and promote and support free trade.

Mr. Yassir Ahmed, a border-trader from El Geneina, West Darfur, has been working in the import-export business for more than 15 years. Mr. Ahmed, whose trucks move back and forth between Chad and Sudan, typically sells Sudanese goods such as mineral water, rice, cement, salt, leather and shoes. Before his trucks move from El Geneina to Chad, Mr. Ahmed stops at the local customs office to pay the necessary tariffs. And when he imports, he must pay similar customs fees. On the journey back from Chad, Mr. Ahmed typically loads his trucks with clothes and cosmetics.

Officials in the office of the West Darfur Customs Authority point out that border trade contributes to Sudan's national economy and Darfur's local economy, and helps develop and promote domestic products. "Border trade has helped in lifting standards of living and in bringing in high income, making border areas more prosperous," says Col. Othman Idam, the manager of the West Darfur Customs Authority. Mr. Idam explains that there

is great benefit for traders to move easily across the border.

Mr. Ahmed is one example of many traders who have profited from goods flowing between Sudan and Chad. "It has been of great benefit to me," he says, noting that international trade from Darfur can have a positive impact on whole communities, not just the traders themselves. "It is always in the interest of our community here to have such border trade."

Two other geographical points of trade are the two largest cities in Darfur: Nyala, South Darfur, and El Fasher, North Darfur. Sudan and Chad are planning to construct a road connecting key towns in Sudan to Chad's capital city of N'djamena and establish a railway line stretching from the town of Nyala to Abashe, Chad. Meanwhile, El Fasher continues to serve in the trade process as one of the main hubs for commerce into and out of Darfur. Goods pass through El Fasher to and from different regions in Sudan and beyond.

To enhance trade through Darfur, the Government of Sudan has been working for more than one decade to pave a 1,000-kilometre-long road that will reduce the travel time between El Fasher and Khartoum. The road is still incomplete, but a large portion of it is paved. In the past, vehicles have had to spend more than two days traveling this route.

While traders continue to express hope that their border routes will remain open, merchants sell their goods locally. Mr.

Bashir Morsal, a merchant who sells shoes in El Fasher, said he had to close his store early last year because no one was buying. But with some optimism for a potential return to a strong economy, he reopened his shop late last year in the hope that he will again be able to make a profit. Indeed, Mr. Morsal says he is confident that prices of some goods will begin to come down.

Border-traders in all areas of Darfur say that free and open trade is a critical aspect of helping Darfur return to a more stable economic condition. As an example of the kind of respect for and appreciation of those who trade their goods across the borders here, the traders from El Daein typically travel in groups, knowing that there is safety in numbers. But given that the traders are all part of a community, banditry and criminality are not common on the trade routes, as the routes themselves run through villages populated with people willing to assist them in their movement.

"We are welcomed along the way and whenever we face any kind of dispute, it is resolved amicably by the community leaders," says Mr. Mohammed. Security issues, he explains, can be sidestepped simply by communicating with other members of the trading community. "We have developed relations with our neighbours across the border," he says. "Whenever we are coming, they direct us which route to use in case there is a possibility of facing any difficulties." ■

A Darfuri with a donkey and cart brings goods to Sigili, North Darfur. Donkeys and carts are typically used on border trade routes when the roads become impassable to cars and trucks during the rainy season. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



Bread: Darfur's Ubiquitous Food

Bread-making, done at home or in bakeries, is one of the most essential components of life in Darfur. In this region of Sudan, as in other parts of the world, bread is a regular fixture at almost every meal.

BY ALBERT GONZÁLEZ FARRAN

Considering that Darfur is almost always a hot place, working in the bread-making business here requires significant physical endurance, as the heat in a local bakery is as high as the demand for this popular food. Bread-making is one of the most essential components of life in Darfur. In this region of Sudan, as in other parts of the world, bread is a regular fixture at almost every meal.

Thousands upon thousands of loaves of bread are made and sold in bakeries each day across Darfur. Given the extremely small profit margins, one could say that Darfur's bread-makers are driven by motives other than profit. Bread is so popular and essential in Darfur that the act of making it might even be considered a public service.

Some families make their own bread at home. They mill the grain manually using traditional grinding stones called *Murhaka* and *Funduk*, with techniques that derive from hundreds of years of tradition, passed down from generation to generation. The *Murhaka* and *Funduk* are ubiquitous tools in Darfur's rural and low-income homes. Outside of the cities and larger towns in Darfur, modern electric-powered grinders are rare because they are priced beyond the reach of most families.

The *Murhaka*, the most common grinding tool, is essentially a large sculpted stone base that requires the *Wad al Murahaka* (the son of *Murhaka*) to work. To use the *Murhaka*, the *Wad al Murahaka* is rocked back and forth or slid across the surface of the *Murhaka*. Together, they are used to grind maize, sesame, sorghum, peanuts and many other types of raw ingredients.

The *Funduk*, meanwhile, is a hollow wooden or metal base that is used to pulverize ingredients with a straight metal or wooden rod known locally as the *Amoud*. The *Amoud* is pounded forcefully against the *Funduk's* hollow inner surface—like a giant mortar and pestle—to crush ingredients that can then be refined into smaller and smaller granules by using the *Murhaka* and *Wad al Murahaka*.

Refining three kilograms of flour by hand takes roughly two hours. The process is strenuous, and requires manipulating the *Wad al Murahaka* while kneeling over the *Murhaka*. Long hours of grinding, especially if bread is being made for a large gathering of friends, will take a toll on those who use these tools. To relieve stress and physical exhaustion resulting from this traditional way of mak-

ing flour, those working these tools will typically sing local songs as they work.

While there are those Darfuris who bake their own bread at home, others buy their bread at local markets or directly from bakeries. At the bakeries, a loaf of bread is typically sold for one-half a Sudanese pound (roughly seven U.S. cents). Bakers must work efficiently to make any profit.

Some Darfur bakeries acquire their flour from local mills, and others order flour directly from Khartoum, but their goals are all the same: produce a maximum amount of bread in a minimum amount of time. The high demand for bread in Darfur and the resulting abundance of bakers and bakeries have led to production techniques that could be characterised not only as highly efficient, but even as elegant in their rhythm and simplicity.

Kilos and kilos of flour are baked every day here in gas or wood ovens, in shops run as traditionally structured businesses or as cooperatives, where there is no single owner. In the bakery cooperatives, a group of like-minded individuals runs the shop and shares in the profit. From early morning to late at night, single-owner business or co-op, the bakers' devices mix a seemingly endless amount of water and flour, producing the large quantities of dough that is shaped by hand and fed into the always-on ovens at regular intervals.

As this photo essay illustrates, tradition in Darfur does not conflict with industrialisation. While the typical bakery in Darfur is far from large-scale automation, bakers here are not averse to mixing their manual bread-making methods with modern equipment that can shave precious seconds from the time it takes to make a large batch of bread.

1 A miller selects grain in a local market in El Fasher, North Darfur. The grain will be used to produce flour that will be baked immediately into bread and sold directly to Darfuris.

2 A miller starts the engine of his automatic mill to produce flour from grain purchased at a local market. The flour will be sold to bakeries.

3 A baker prepares dough from freshly milled flour to make bread in his bakery.







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- 4 *Dough is shaped into loaves prior to being placed on staging trays before baking. Loaves share a common shape in Darfur.*
- 5 *Two bakers fill a tray with loaf-shaped dough to make bread in their bakery. The bread is usually sold in batches.*
- 6 *Two bakers lift a tray with dough to make bread in their bakery in El Fasher. These bakers make hundreds of loaves daily.*
- 7 *A baker feeds dough into an oven to make bread in his bakery in El Fasher. The oven stays hot all day long.*
- 8 *A baker pull freshly baked bread from the oven. Bread is in such high demand here, it is typically sold while warm.*
- 9 *A customer purchases freshly baked bread at the bakery. One loaf of bread typically costs one-half a Sudanese pound.*



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Music Therapy: A Conversation with Musician Mua'wiya Musa

Voices of Darfur talked with Mr. Mua'wiya Musa, a noted El Fasher musician, about the music he creates, about the influence of music on peace and about this art form in Darfur.

BY ALA MAYYAH



On 21 July 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Mr. Mua'wiya Musa is pictured in the sound studio at his home. Mr. Musa is a composer who supports his work with a day job in graphic design, a field in which he received a university degree. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Born in 1975 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Mr. Mua'wiya Musa is a Darfuri musician. Although his academic studies were not in music—they focused instead on Arabic calligraphy—his passion for music won out over his other interests, and occupy a significant amount of his spare time.

Mr. Musa's love for music did not stop him from completing his education. He finished high school in El Fasher, then studied in the Social Development Institute in the College of Fine Arts at the University of El Fasher. Today, while he works in a field in which he earned his degree, he

dedicates time each day to composing and playing music.

In this conflict-torn region of the world, Mr. Musa says, music plays a critical role as a survival tool that can help people cope with life's hardships. In this sense, this El Fasher musician considers the music here to be a kind of ad hoc therapy, useful for helping struggling Darfuris not merely endure, but also look to a future filled with peace, and prevail in the end against the forces of conflict.

To hear more about his perspective on this living art, *Voices of Darfur* talked

with Mr. Musa about the music he creates, about the influence of music on the peace process and about this art form in Darfur.

Voices of Darfur: What were your first experiences with music and how did you get started?

Mr. Musa: First, in high school, I started learning to play the accordion. At that time, the school had cultural assemblies through which students would present their art, such as drama, poetry and music. I used to watch all those activities, and it was then that I knew I had passion for music. I decided to learn to play the ac-

cordion because the instrument was available in my school for student activities. I started practicing by myself in the school music room, and my friends encouraged me. I used to spend long hours practicing until my shoulders and arms would hurt. That was my start with music.

Then I started playing the accordion outdoors in my neighbourhood along with my friends, who played other instruments. These sessions enhanced my playing skills and helped me become good at playing the accordion. Later, I joined a band called "Darfur Arts," which used to get requests by families to perform in some of their occasions.

After that, I played in a band with my high school friends. We called the band "Abaad," and we performed in the El Fasher Cultural Centre. But that band didn't last for long. By that time, in addition to being able to play the accordion, I could also play the organ. I had one of my own, so I started performing by myself at different occasions, such as social and cultural events, and I gained a good reputation in El Fasher. People started requesting me to perform for their events.

VoD: What is the instrument that you play mainly now?

Mr. Musa: currently, I play mainly on the electronic keyboard, which can create the sounds of other instruments through its stored digital memory. I also play the guitar and the oud, which is similar to the guitar, but it's designed mainly for Middle Eastern music.

VoD: Do you only play, or do you compose your own songs as well?

Mr. Musa: Actually, I compose and do music mixing as well as using a digital recording system.

VoD: What type of music do you usually compose, classic or contemporary?

Mr. Musa: I like contemporary music, so most of my music pieces are contemporary, but they have the special flavour of the Sudanese style.

VoD: Most artists get inspired by

one or more famous artists. What about you? Is there a famous musician, local or international, who has inspired you to play?

Mr. Musa: There isn't one particular artist or musician that I like most, but there are a lot of music works that interest me, Western and Middle Eastern.

VoD: Do you compose songs, or only musical scores?

Mr. Musa: I compose songs only upon request and when I like the lyrics. So far, I've composed more than 20 songs that have been written by friends. These songs

"Most musicians suffer from the ongoing conflict and the resulting difficult living situation in the same way other artists and other Darfuris do. If there were peace, artists in Darfur would be able to produce more art, and that would illustrate how many artists there actually are in Darfur. It would also show that we are in fact a civilized people, not warmongers."

treated different subjects: emotional, patriotic, religious as well as subjects for children. Some of these songs were broadcast on local radio stations.

VoD: Do you have a band that you perform with currently?

Mr. Musa: For now, I play on my own, and that's because the difficult situation here has affected all cultural activities in Darfur. But I compensate for the absence of a band with digital instruments generated by my keyboard, which also can produce beats as though a whole band is playing.

VoD: Where do you record your music? Do you record in a studio?

Mr. Musa: I have a home studio where I record all my music. I plug the

keyboard into my computer and I use applications for digital recording. Currently, in El Fasher, there isn't an audio-recording studio that is available to musicians. Probably, I'm the only one in town who uses the system of digital audio recording.

VoD: This computer recording technique requires advanced skills. How did you learn the specific computer applications required for this process? Did you teach yourself?

Mr. Musa: I learned it later on after I took some music courses in Khartoum at the Um Durman Youth Centre in 2004. I got some work there as a musician, and that allowed me to attend studios for audio recording. I learned how to operate recording and mixing systems.

VoD: Have you had the opportunity to distribute some of your music in the markets to promote your work?

Mr. Musa: Some of the songs I've composed have been distributed in the local market. These songs were funded by some singers and distributed on CD and cassette. The latest music I composed was for a UNAMID multimedia project that featured a theatre group. The video clip was used for International Youth Day. My music helped to enhance that project.

VoD: Are you dedicated as a musician, full-time, or do you do other work at same time to support your music?

Mr. Musa: I work in graphic design. It's a job that helps me support myself.

VoD: Does the conflict here in Darfur affect your music?

Mr. Musa: Of course. Creative work needs to be done with a specific mentality and with a certain mood, but the financial and social difficulties in Darfur can easily disturb an artist's inner world. If my living circumstances were better, my music productivity certainly would have been much better.

VoD: What about other Darfuri musicians? Do you know if they suffer as well from the situation here?

Mr. Musa: Most musicians suffer from the ongoing conflict and the resulting difficult living situation in the same way other artists and other Darfuris do. If there were peace, artists in Darfur would be able to produce more art, and that would illustrate how many artists there actually are in Darfur. It would also show that we are in fact a civilized people, not warmongers.

VoD: Are young Darfuri musicians influence by western music or do they tend to keep to their local styles and traditional forms of music?

Mr. Musa: Western culture has dominated all developing nations, including Sudan and the region of Darfur. So many contemporary Darfuri songs are made in a western style, and played by western musical instruments such as the guitar and drums. But even these songs have a Darfuri flavour.

VoD: Do you think using foreign styles enriches Darfuri music?

Mr. Musa: I think we should keep the music patterns and beats that are typically Darfuri even when embracing foreign music styles. This way, we can enrich our local music without obliterating its identity.

VoD: Tell us about the main features of Darfuri music in terms of rhythms and patterns. Are they different from music in other areas in Sudan, such as the Khartoum area and Blue Nile?

Mr. Musa: There is a saying that goes “dancing is the nation’s mirror.” I say that dancing is about beat, and beat is all about feeling life. I will give you an example here: the Baqara tribe has its own fast beat in its music, which is inspired by the fast speed of the cattle. Some desert tribes, in contrast, use slow beats, reflecting the slow movements of the camels and the harsh monotonous environment in which they live. So Darfuri beats differ even from one tribe to another.

As for singing patterns, there are many of them, such as the *Dobet*, the *Hadday*, the *Sunjuk*. These are developed from tribes of Arabic origin. There are also the African singing patterns. In general, Darfuri music has its own character, which distinguishes it from the music created in other areas of Sudan. Still, we can say that Sudanese music all has a similar flavour.

VoD: Is Sudanese music closer to African music than it is to Arabic music?



On 21 July 2013 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Mr. Mua’wiya Musa is pictured in the sound studio at his home. Mr. Musa is a composer who supports his work with a day job in graphic design, a field in which he received a university degree. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“Unfortunately, the difficult living situation here undermines musicians’ ability to play a more effective social role. Thus, their role in advancing peace and reconciliation is limited, which is a sad situation to me.”

Mr. Musa: Sudanese music comes in between. It has both an African and an Arabic feel. For example, the seventh scale is used widely in Arabic music, and also in some Sudanese tribes. And there is the fifth scale, which is used widely across Africa. It’s used in Sudan as well. This fifth scale is actually used worldwide, and the famous singer Bob Marley used it in many of his songs.

VoD: In terms of local music, what do you think of the songs of the Hakamat? And do you think their value is more social or artistic?

Mr. Musa: Women performed the Hakamat songs long before the conflict in Darfur, when they encouraged noble moral values among tribe members. These values included generosity and courage. The Hakamat songs have continued during the conflict, although many of the Hakamas now are chanting for peace. Musically, I see in these songs high creativity and intelligence. The Hakamas write the lyrics and the accompanying melodies, and they also sing the songs they create.

VoD: How in your opinion can the Darfuri musicians contribute to advancing peace and reconciliation in the region?

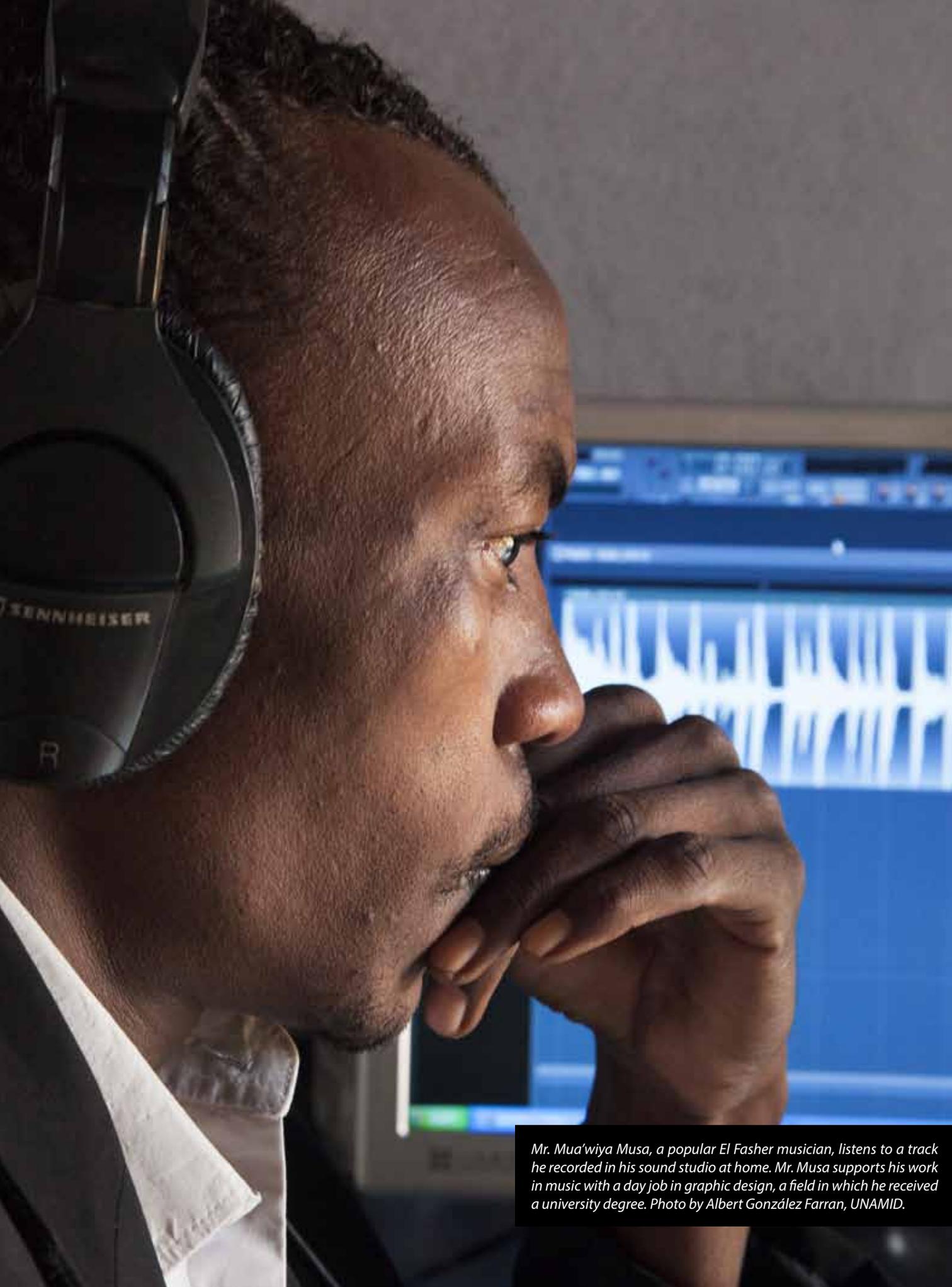
Mr. Musa: Unfortunately, the difficult living situation here undermines musicians’ ability to play a more effective social role. Thus, their role in advancing peace and reconciliation is limited, which is a sad situation to me.

VoD: Have you participated in activities to promote peace in Darfur?

Mr. Musa: Yes. I participated in the Fourth Cultural Festival in 1998, and in 2007 in the Arab Youth Festival in Khartoum, where I won the gold medal in solo piano. Also, I’ve been composing music for peace in Darfur, but this music hasn’t been broadcast or published yet.

VoD: What would you like to tell the people of Darfur?

Mr. Musa: I would like to tell them to embrace noble human values and change a war culture into a peace culture so that we can have an opportunity to show the world our art.



Mr. Mua'wiya Musa, a popular El Fasher musician, listens to a track he recorded in his sound studio at home. Mr. Musa supports his work in music with a day job in graphic design, a field in which he received a university degree. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



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