



December 2008

United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

THE
RIGHT TO LIVE
ANYWHERE

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DIARY

- **14 November:** Representatives from the Dinka Malual and Misseriya tribes from Meiram area ended a three-day peace conference in Aweil with renewed promises to grant the Misseriya unhindered access to grazing areas and water points.
- **18 November:** The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sudan, Ashraf Qazi, welcomed approval of the National Elections Commission (NEC) by the National Assembly and pledged UNMIS' readiness to assist with preparations for forthcoming elections.
- **20 November:** The United Nations and partners launched the 2009 Sudan Work Plan in Geneva, requesting \$2.18 billion to support humanitarian and early recovery programmes and lay the groundwork for future development in Sudan.
- **20 November:** International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo presented evidence to Court judges against rebel commanders for their alleged responsibility in an attack against African Union peacekeepers at Haskanita camp, Darfur, on 29 September 2007, which claimed the lives of 12 peacekeepers.
- **28 November:** The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report indicating that arbitrary arrests and detentions were widespread in many parts of Sudan. According to the report, security services, police, the Sudan Armed Forces and Sudan People's Liberation Army had all committed such violations.
- **29 November:** Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) failed to show up to sign the LRA Final Peace Agreement, negotiated by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for LRA-affected areas Joaquim Chissano, Vice-President of the Government of Southern Sudan Dr. Riek Machar and other stakeholders.
- **30 November:** The UN Mine Action Office completed a series of workshops to jointly develop a transition framework and plan to transfer ownership of the Sudan Mine Action Programme to the National Mine Action Centre based in Khartoum, and the South Sudan Demining Commission based in Juba.
- **30 November:** UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes concluded a six-day visit to Sudan by reiterating the importance of protecting civilians and urging improved cooperation with the government in facilitating humanitarian assistance.
- **1 December:** World AIDS Day was observed with a variety of activities throughout Sudan. Speaking at an event in Juba, President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir declared 2009 as a year for combating the disease.
- **4 December:** Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ashraf Qazi visited Abyei, meeting with Abyei Area Chief Administrator Arop Moyak and his Deputy, Rahama Abdelrahman Al-Nour, at the town's new Civil Administration premises.
- **5 December:** International Volunteer Day was celebrated with activities in Ed Damazin, Kadugli, Rumbek, Kapoeta and Juba. In Khartoum, a free medical camp was set up the day before in Ombadda area of Omdurman in collaboration with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the Sudanese Council for Voluntary Agencies, in partnership with Sudanese NGOs.



United Nations Mission

InSUDAN

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News Briefs

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Front cover: Cattle camp of IDPs from Jonglei State on outskirts of Nimule. **PHOTO:** UNMIS/Tim McKulka

Back cover: Mother with her children from Ganis, outside Edamazin, attending class at Future School. **PHOTO:** UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

THE RIGHT TO LIVE ANYWHERE

Commission moving to address land disputes

When Ben Demale and his brother James returned to the Southern Sudanese town of Nimule after spending 19 years in a Ugandan refugee camp, they met with a nasty surprise.

When the brothers found some internally displaced persons (IDPs) occupying their land and asked if they could build there too, the IDPs turned aggressive and attacked James.

"When my brother said that, after all, this is our land, he was beaten unconscious and later on taken to the hospital," said Ben. "We could not go back to that place again because we were afraid of being beaten."

Olikwi *boma* (community) Chief John Akim Lodu, who also spent 19 years in Uganda, was treated similarly by IDPs who had settled on his land. "To our surprise, some threatened to kill us with their guns, saying they had fought over this land, which is ridiculous talk."

Like Ben and the chief, many of the mainly *Madi* community returnees now flooding back to Nimule have complained of being threatened by IDPs on claiming back their land. The harassment has even discouraged some from coming back, according to returnees.

The *Madis* argue that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) says the land belongs to the community. But the CPA also states that everyone has the right "to choose his/her residence".

Of Nimule's over 23,000 IDPs, some have returned to their original homes. But many have opted to remain, attracted by the area's natural beauty as well as its booming trade with Uganda and Kenya.

IDP elder Atem Diing said some of the



A family of the Madi tribe, indigenous to Nimule, recently returned from refugee camps in Uganda are unable to return to their family plots as the are occupied by IDPs from other parts of southern Sudan

displaced were just living in Nimule until repatriation to their homes, while others were afraid to leave. "Some are unwilling [to leave] because of the challenges of implementation of the CPA and other problems in their states."

According to IDP Chief Peter Panon, many IDPs were women and children of Sudan People's Liberation Army soldiers, who had remained during the rainy season due to difficulties moving their cattle. Many, he said, would return to their homes now that the dry season had arrived.

Disputes have also arisen when IDP cattle trample crops planted by the mainly farming returnees or roam the town at will, sleeping on the roads, according to *Payam* (township) Administrator Salva Olwenyi Butruce, himself a returnee.

"It really is a bit difficult to solve the issue related to land because up to now we don't have a land act/policy to guide

us in solving issues related to land," Mr. Butruce said.

Wilson Kiri Lado of the Southern Sudan Land Commission pointed out that a land act was on its way, and that it should help resolve conflicts in Nimule as well as several other towns across the region, where disputes had broken out.

In an effort to minimize such conflicts, his Commission began educating people about land issues shortly after it was set up in June 2006, Mr. Lado said. "We made a tour in all the states and conducted a number of consultative workshops on land-related issues for all the stakeholders."

Based on the workshops, a committee was formed that included, inter alia, representatives of the Southern Sudan Land Commission, Ministry of Legal Affairs, European Union, the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) and political parties to draw up the land bill.

The bill was submitted to the Ministry of Legal Affairs a year ago, and then passed to the SSLA, said Mr. Lado. "The first reading was completed by the Assembly. Now it's at the second phase of the reading ... we expect it to be passed before Christmas."

The Commission was now working on land policies, which might take some time, being the first Southern Sudan had developed, Mr. Lado added. "I would like to urge all communities in Southern Sudan not to trigger conflicts among themselves because of land issues or land grabbing ... the law and the policies will address and solve all these problems." ■

Ojja Bosco

Photos by Tim McKulka



Cattle camp of IDPs from Jonglei State on the outskirts of Nimule

FREED FROM A “CURSE”

Fistula campaign treats 54 women for chronic antenatal condition



Fistula patient recovering after surgery . PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

Having recently recovered from fistula, Aden Dek said she could now rejoin her community in Rumbek without the suffering and shame she had endured for the past two years.

“I was considered cursed by my community,” said Aden, speaking at the closing ceremony of the third UN Population Fund (UNFPA)-organized fistula campaign in Juba on 21 November.

“There are some women who have the same problem I did ... they have even lost hope that they can get better again. We are going to tell them that there is treatment when we go back,” Aden told participants at the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly event.

Obstetric fistula is a hole in the birth canal caused by prolonged labour without prompt medical intervention, usually a Caesarean section. The woman is left with chronic incontinence and, in most cases, the baby is stillborn.

The odour of leaking urine or faeces is constant and humiliating, often driving loved ones away. Left untreated, fistula can lead to chronic medical problems, including ulcerations, kidney disease, and nerve damage in the legs.

Aden is one of many women in Southern Sudan who lack access to antenatal care for prompt diagnosis of fistula, or receive it too late for successful treatment without complications.

The condition is considered a “curse” for an assumed wrongdoing in many communities, rather than a medical condition. The stigma of the condition keeps many women hidden away, with

some lapsing into deep physical and emotional decline or even resorting to suicide.

For its third fistula campaign, UNFPA hired Dr. Oladosu Ojengbade of Nigeria to perform surgeries and also train Sudanese doctors and nurses in Juba Teaching Hospital to treat fistula cases after his departure.

Dr. Ojengbade noted at the closing that 16 cases had been treated in the first 2006 campaign, 34 at the second in 2007 and 52 this year, bringing the total to 102. “More than 150 were registered in 2008 ... the remaining patients will be admitted to Juba Teaching Hospital.”

The campaign focused on three components -- surgery, psychosocial counselling to address stigmatization by communities and micro-business training to help patients begin a new life. UNFPA was also providing each patient with \$250 dollars to help start up a small business.

UNFPA Sudan head Dr. Dragudi Buwa said fistula was a big problem in the region, which was widely unknown at the outset of the campaign. “Later we realized it was [because of] lack of information on fistula cases [because of] limited access to health facilities in many communities in Southern Sudan.”

Dr. Buwa added that UNFPA would train doctors selected by the Ministry of Health, and continue to support Juba Teaching Hospital. “Nobody deserves to suffer the way

“Nobody deserves to suffer the way fistula victims do in the course of life-giving”

fistula victims do in the course of life-giving,” he told the gathering.

Juba Teaching Hospital Director Dr. Dario Kuron noted that Dr. Oladosu had put smiles back on the faces of victims, families and communities, which had been lost years ago. “It is a great opportunity to celebrate this success.”

Dr. Atem Nathan, Director General of Primary Medical Health Services at the Ministry of Health said his ministry would support establishment of a fistula centre. Noting that a maternity ward had been completed at Juba Teaching Hospital this year, he said similar facilities would be set up in Wau and Malakal.

Also attending the event were Janet Michael, Director-General of Nursing and Midwifery services, micro-business trainers, psychosocial counsellors, treated fistula victims from Southern Sudanese states and nurses from Juba Teaching Hospital.

UNFPA helped transport patients to the campaign by air from Malakal, Rumbek, Wau and other parts of Southern Sudan.

Emmanuel Kenyi



Preparation for fistula surgery . PHOTO: UNMIS/Fred Noy

COMMUNITIES FIGHTING FGM

As younger pupils wrestled in the schoolyard, older ones waited for a “community conversation” to begin in the classroom of a boys’ school south of the Omdurman area of Khartoum.

The older boys, taking part in a pilot project on 18 November, were about to learn why female genital mutilation (FGM) was harmful and should be stopped.

Placing a plastic device on a desk fronting the basic classroom, volunteer facilitator Yasir Abd Elgadir prepared to demonstrate the biological aspects of female genital mutilation.

Initially, one could see traces of self-consciousness, suppressed smiles on the 14-to-17 year-old students’ faces, but Mr. Elgadir’s dynamic presentation and thought-provoking questions soon had their attention.

“If our hand is dirty, do we wash it or do we cut it off?” he responded to a suggestion coming from the benches, that the practice involving girls aged mainly four-to-seven might have a hygienic reason.

The pilot project, revolutionary in introducing males to discussions about FGM, was launched in 2006 by Ahfad University for Women, the UN Volunteer (UNV) programme, the UN Population Fund and national institutions.

The boys’ school community conversation session was one of the closing events of the project, which stresses local community action and volunteering.

According to the Sudan Household Health Survey of 2006, the latest to record health conditions and practices, almost

“God created humans in the best way, so there is no need to change or cut things.”

70 per cent of northern Sudanese women undergo the FGM, which causes pain and harmful side-effects.

In the project target area of Abu Si’ed, 15 kilometres from Khartoum, the ratio is even higher than the national average. Nine out of ten women are mutilated (94 per cent), according to a baseline survey completed under the anti-FGM project’s framework in 2006.

“If we continue raising awareness, this practice will stop,” said Batool Mustafa Muhammed Ali, a woman in her fifties who had been an enthusiastic participant of the project.

“When I circumcised my daughters, I didn’t know about the relations between FGM ... and that the complications I suffered were due to the practice,” said Ms. Ali. Thanks to the project, she now advised her daughters not to have their daughters circumcised.

FGM includes all procedures involving partial or total removal of external female genitalia, or other injury to those organs for non-medical reasons. It can cause severe bleeding and other problems, including potential childbirth complications and newborn deaths.

When students mentioned religious reasons for the practice, the facilitator said, “God created humans in the best way, so there is no need to change or cut things.” Limia Khalifa, a national UNV



Batool Mustafa Muhammed Ali

volunteer, added that the project had also involved religious leaders, who had raised their voices against FGM.

Ms. Khalifa said the joint project’s main achievement was reducing incidences of the most severe form of FGM, called infibulation. Although it would end in December, a community-based initiative would carry the project on, as trained volunteers had formed a non-governmental organization.

“Change will happen gradually,” said Ms. Ali, adding that “a strong law is needed to punish the practitioners”. This may be achieved, as Section 145 of the pending Criminal Bill introduces “Female Circumcision” as a crime. If passed, FGM practitioners could be punished with imprisonment and withdrawal of their licenses.

Southern Kordofan State made a historical step in November of this year by passing the Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Law, which criminalized practicing and promoting FGM.

According to Ms. Limia, no statistics existed on FGM in Southern Sudan and the 2006 Household Survey did not include it under the topic. Most tribes in the south did not believe in the practice, she said.

According to the WHO, about three million girls are at risk of FGM in Africa annually. ■



FGM workshop at boys school in Omdurman, Khartoum

*Eszter Farkas
Photos by Johann Hattingh*

UNITING AGAINST HIV/AIDS

The civil war may have ended but a new enemy has arrived



UNMIS Bangladesh Contingent with children at World AIDS Day event, University of Juba

Eva Urah said she fell prey to HIV/AIDS after her husband died of liver disease and she was inherited by his brother, who was HIV positive.

"No women should accept to be inherited without knowing the status of the man, so that they don't fall victim like I did," Eva told a gathering celebrating World AIDS Day at Juba's Nyakuron Cultural Centre on 1 December.

She urged the government to support people living with AIDS as well as children orphaned by the disease. Communities should not stigmatize those living with AIDS or discriminate against them for employment purposes, She stressed.

Also attending the event was First Vice-President of Sudan and President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Salva Kiir, who cited several ways the disease was being spread in addition to inherited brides.

The country had opened up after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005, the President said, and HIV/AIDS was multiplying via returnees from abroad, the arrival of commercial sex workers, alcohol-induced acts and businessmen as well as women from Southern Sudan's neighbours.

Pledging the government's full support for AIDS victims, he said they should and would receive the same treatment as those without the disease, and urged

"People living with AIDS should be given equal employment opportunities without discrimination because they still have a responsibility to the country" Salva Kiir

communities to do the same.

HIV victims should be provided the means to earn their livelihoods, Mr. Kiir stressed. "People living with AIDS should be given equal employment opportunities without discrimination because they still have a responsibility to the country."

He emphasized that the Day showed solidarity in commemorating brothers and sisters who had been lost to AIDS. "We have just come out of war and an enemy (HIV/AIDS) that has proved more dangerous than the war is still around us." He warned, "It may finish us if serious measures are not taken to contain it."

Mr. Kiir encouraged all southern citizens to undergo Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) for HIV/AIDS. "Knowing your HIV status is very important ... it gives you

confidence. When you're negative, it will help you protect yourself and when you're positive, you will be given advice and care that can help you live longer," the President said.

Calling on all Southern Sudanese people to unite in fighting the pandemic, Mr. Kiir declared 2009 as a year for combating HIV/AIDS in the region.

Other participants at the event included Government of National Unity Minister of Health Dr. Tabita Butros, GoSS and state ministers as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, the diplomatic community, civil society, students and parents.

The celebrations began with a march from the University of Juba to Nyakuron Cultural Centre. Participants included representatives of the southern military, police and prisons services as well as women, AIDS sufferers and the general public.

The Day's activities were organized by the Southern Sudan AIDS Commission (SSAC) in collaboration with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the non-governmental organizations Population Service International and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society.

During the previous week, mobile VCT units were set up in Juba's main markets by the SSAC and partners to gather data on AIDS prevalence in the city.

The Day saw the official opening of the regional headquarters of SSAC, a major milestone in the south's management of HIV/AIDS activities. ■

Story and photos by Emmanuel Kenyi



World AIDS Day march, Juba

UNDER A TREE

Sudanese women teaching each other in open-air “Future School”

Wearing a black nikab (long gown with facial veil), volunteer teacher Nahida Mohammad wrote Arabic characters on the blackboard under a huge tree at the newly initiated women’s “Future School” in Abu Ganees.

Unlike regular schools, this one was unique with its tree roof and walls provided by nearby houses. Lacking desks and benches, women brought along their own chairs or mats to attend classes.

The school was launched in October by UN Police Gender Officer Shelja Bhadouria, Ms. Mohammad and two other women from the community, Sumiya Hassan and Salwa Ahmed. Abu Ganees, a small village of about 5,000 people, lies 20 kilometres away from Ed Damazin.

Ms. Bhadouria made about 15 visits to the village before she convinced women to come together and educate themselves. “I told them education is the tool -- it can empower a woman to achieve a good position in society,” she said.

Currently, classes are two hours long, including reading and writing basic Arabic. The teachers are planning to extend lessons to four hours with new subjects, like basic mathematics.

The school has 75 students, some of them mothers with grown-up children, while others brought their youngsters to school. Yet all were as passionate about studying as any young pupils eager to learn new things.

“I want to look after my children in a better way, to have more knowledge to manage my house better,” said a 24-year-old student, Nimat, when asked about her motivation to learn.

The three voluntary teachers also dealt in health and hygiene issues. They even taught nursery school children. It was a rare opportunity to see mothers and children going to the same school and class.

“Now I can read and write like my sons do,” said 40-year-old Aamna Hamid, who has two educated sons already working and is one of the most active students of Future School.

As the women also wanted to study English, Ms. Bhadouria and her team were planning to ask the Ministry of Education to nominate an English teacher for the school.

Besides having collected money to equip the school with two blackboards, Ms. Bhadouria’s team was working on a Quick Impact Programme proposal for



Women from Ganis outside Damazin attending a class in Future School



A female student during the class

Literacy of Sudanese women

The socio-economic situation for Sudanese women, who make up about 65 per cent of the rural population, remains one of the worst in Eastern Africa, according to the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

In rural northern Sudan, nearly half (46 per cent) of girls aged 6-to-16 years have never attended school, the agency notes. In Southern Sudan, it is estimated that some 90 per cent of women are illiterate. The region has a female youth illiteracy rate (ages 15-to-24) of 84 per cent and the lowest ratio of female to male primary school enrolment in the world, with three times as many boys as girls attending school.

The high illiteracy rate for women in Southern Sudan makes achieving the 25 per cent target of women’s representation in government difficult. Reaffirming its commitment to women’s empowerment, the Government of Southern Sudan has appointed two women ministers and selected five other women to chair newly created commissions.

additional funding.

Sumiya Hassan, one of the initiators, believed in a proper school for the village’s women -- irrespective of their age. With hope in her eyes, she said she would convince the Ministry of Education to provide a roof for the school. ■

*Sarika Shinde,
with inputs from Eszter Farkas
Photos by Johann Hattingh*

SUDANESE PHOTOGRAPHERS IN PARIS



As part of a month-long focus on photography throughout Paris, three Sudanese photographers exhibited their work at UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters from 31 October to 14 November.

UNESCO invited the photographers -- Ali Mohammed Osman, Sidi Mactar and Mohammed Noureldine -- to the event, which they then used as an opportunity to attract new clients.

The exhibition was organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the Permanent Delegation of Sudan to UNESCO. It was opened by UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information Abdul Waheed Khan and the Ambassador of Sudan to France, Sulieman Mohamed Mustafa.

The three photographers belong to Photo Sudan Network, the first independent photographic agency in Sudan. The project brings together a group of highly talented, independent photographers, whose work focuses on documentary, corporate, reportage, journalism, fine art and educational subjects.

Photo Sudan Network launched its official website on 15 April 2008 (www.photosudan.net).

Mohammed Noureldine is a veteran photo journalist with more than 20 years experience through a view finder, who has distinguished himself as a photographic artist. His work has been distributed through various press houses and organizations.

Mohammed graduated from the College of Fine and Applied Arts at Khartoum Polytechnic in 1986 with a degree in Graphic Design, having done research in artistic photography.

Mohammed is known as a master of the photo essay, where sequential images tell a story spoken in a universal language of emotion and pathos.

"My main goal is to capture the essence of the subjects and not the surface - in other words, to show the depth of the human being," says Mohammed.



Sheltering under a book. PHOTO: Mohammed Noureldine

Ali Mohammed Osman is head of the photographic department and a lecturer in the Fine Arts Faculty at the University of Sudan in Khartoum. Ali has distinguished himself for his innovative approaches in the fields of photography and graphic arts.

Ali regularly exhibits in Europe and in Sudan. He was invited to Germany several times to teach experimental photography, which he practices with as much interest as documentary photography. In 2001, he was invited by UNICEF Khartoum to organize a photographic workshop with local professionals about photographic copyrights.

Ali was the director of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Sudan in Khartoum from 1999 to 2002. He then returned to his former post as head of the photographic department and lecturer in graphic arts. Since then, he has increasingly devoted his energies to personal projects.





Sufi gathering, Omdurman. PHOTO: Mohammed Nouredine



Traditional hut with modern decorations, Southern Sudan. PHOTO: Ali Mohammed Osman

Sidi Moctar is the official photographer of the Kwoto Dance Company in Khartoum. He settled in Sudan in 1982 after travelling throughout Africa, capturing the life of the continent in one outstanding image after another.

Once established in Khartoum, he quickly became known to all strata of Sudanese society, photographing everything from official events to weddings.

Inspired by the people of Sudan, Sidi's work is recorded in

countless trips through the heartland, which he admires for its rich culture and ethnic traditions. He follows the threads of Sudanese life as seen through travel, recording modes of transport from donkeys and trains Nile ferries.

Sidi is also interested in life as seen through hands -- the furtive hand on the shoulder that reveals hidden intimacy, the hand that begs, another wizened by work in the fields, the hand that ties the turban or lifts the veil, the snapping of the fingers, a signal to stop the bus. ■



Kwoto Dance Company performing in Southern Sudan. PHOTO: Sidi Moctar

WITH PROFESSOR SHOEMAKER IN THE *SOUQ*

Wandering around Omdurman *souq* (market), one marvels at its chaotic medley of goods. Everything can be found there, from traditional woodcarvings and snake-skin shoes to freshly slain chickens.



Professor Ahmed Diab

According to Ahmed Diab, a history professor at Ahfad University, Omdurman Islamic University and El-Azhari University, the market actually has an age-old structure. It is divided into numerous specialized sections, most of which have been there since the *souq* was founded during the Mahdi's rule around 1885.

Despite the international ban, leather and ivory antiquities and shoes made out of animal skins and fur are sought-after. Another feature is a street of handmade, wooden beds called *angreeb* displayed alongside mattresses made on-the-spot from colourful fabrics and stuffed with cotton.

These days, the main shopping street holds clothes, shoes and bags imported mainly from China, the professor says. "Ready-made is something new ... we used to have our clothes made by the tailors sitting at the market with their sewing machines."

The graying, 69-year-old historian

says he began running a shoe shop there while unemployed in 1990. His wife had inherited the shop from her father. "They call me Professor Shoemaker," he adds with a laugh.

In stark contrast to modern-day shops with mass-produced items, one also stumbles upon stores whose history goes back about 70 years. One, a storehouse of dusty, leather hats, leather body shields and good luck charms, is run by a turbaned, rugged, old man and his son.

Ahmed Mohamed, who helps his elderly father run the shop, says a leather case with a blue bead in the middle "offers protection against evil eye and bullets, if you hang it around your neck".

Having wandered through the spices, vegetables and cereals, you come across small stores with barrels of oil and honey. Once you taste the different kinds and make a choice, the shop attendant fills a Fanta bottle, which seems to be standard packaging.

A separate section, once devoted to brooms and other cleaning supplies, is now a car park. The market changed a lot after 1980, when its doors opened up to loads of imported items. Also, "the population in Omdurman increased and local production couldn't keep up with it," says the professor.

A quarter of a football pitch in size at the end of the 19th century, today the market area has quadrupled. Originally built from hay and clay, *Souq* Omdurman was rebuilt from stone in 1936, and renovated again in the 1960s.

The shop-owners have various backgrounds, says Professor Diab.

"They are merchants. Some of them complete secondary school. Some even go to college."

But many adhere to family traditions, he adds. Although nowadays foreigners and women can also own shops, most are still "inherited from grandfather to father to son." ■

Eszter Farkas

Photos by Johann Hattingh



Vendors selling snake-skin shoes



Attendant pouring honey into Fanta bottle



Large section selling fresh vegetables and fruits



Age-old shop offering leather ware and good luck charms

UNWRITTEN LAWS

Long before constitutions and police came to Southern Sudan, chiefs were meting out traditional justice

Sitting in his office at the University of Juba, lecturer Alfred Lokuji described a society that had no police and no jails, yet was highly subject to the rule of law.

Chiefs dealt with errant behaviour under Southern Sudan's traditional authority system, said Mr. Lokuji. Yet in an early stab at democracy, community members also had a say.

"Every citizen is an agent of traditional authority ... [with] the right to bring up any matter for discussion, the right to corporally punish any errant child and the right to express an opinion," he said.

Disputes were initially dealt with at the clan, community or family level, only passing to the chiefs' courts for judgment if left unresolved. While the courts had no written laws, chiefs referred to earlier cases to pass judgments or decide on punishments.

For example, Mr. Lokuji said, "Three years ago, so and so stole so and so's chicken, he was charged 100 SDG, Mr. X eloped with Mr. Y's daughter and he was charged ten heads of cattle and 20,000 SDG."

Courts were systematic with investigations, ensuring that parties were satisfied with rulings and that the guilty agreed to pay any penalties. Charges applied to both men and women, without discrimination.

No jail sentences were handed out to criminals, but they were confined to the village to fulfill any outstanding debt, said Mr. Lokuji. This was ensured through community policing and personal identification, which was common knowledge.

Explaining, he said, "Lodu is the son-of Tombe, son-of Wani of the Logura clan, of Morsak village, whose sub-chief is Pitya Jubek in the chieftainship of Lokuji Wani."

Even if criminals left the area, they would find no place to hide. The offenders' community would pass messages telling other settlements to watch out for them. Other communities would be curious about strangers coming in and question them.

The bulk of court cases were family conflicts such as divorce, elopement, adultery and bridegrooms failing to pay dowries. Courts also handled non-payment of debts, undesirable behaviour like excessive consumption of alcohol and conflicts over cattle grazing.

"Any matter, however grave or simple, can be adjudicated under the traditional system," Mr. Lokuji said.

The court might also perform rituals to eliminate bad habits like drug addiction or alcohol consumption. Juba's Kator Court, for instance, has a long sword made out of mahogany and elephant skin, which is used to swear in drug addicts or drinkers.

Recounting one case, he said a woman with a seven-year alcohol problem came to the court with her husband and brother. "Hold the sword and repeat what I am going to say," the chief told the woman. "I swear that I will not go and drink again. If I do, let this sword strike me dead."

Sworn oaths could also be removed ... at a price. "If you break this oath and you want the court to remove the oath, you will pay 200 Sudanese pounds," the chief said.

Traditional courts still provide justice for the majority of Southern Sudanese people, but have been altered by events. When the British took over Sudan, they created boundaries for chiefs' jurisdictions and divided courts into A, B and C, with C the higher court of appeal.

During the civil war, the chiefs' powers were reduced by the military, which judged cases originally in the hands of the courts, according to Chief Denis Daramalo of Juba's Kator court. University-trained lawyers began to take over other duties.

The traditional justice system currently runs parallel with Sudan's formal court system, noted UNMIS Judicial Affairs

Officer Fatima Persson. UNMIS was working with the UN Development Programme to explore ways of harmonizing the two systems through workshops, roundtables and state-level meetings with customary chiefs.

Another option involved merging the two judicial systems, Ms. Persson said. "But I don't think that would be practical. I feel it is important to respect what people believe."

Moreover, recognition of customary law and traditional courts was clearly spelled out in the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan, she said. People themselves chose traditional justice over formal courts, which operated mainly in urban areas, where litigation was expensive.

"People want to handle their own cases and represent themselves -- not rely on an advocate or lawyer they do not know they can trust."

She said UNMIS judicial officers had found that tribal chiefs adhered to precedent and consistency in applying customary laws in traditional courts, and that people trusted and obeyed their judgments. However, the courts needed to allow women more opportunities to speak and pay more respect to children's rights.

"Children are often used as 'pawns' in settling marital disputes. One party may try to win over the other by using children as barter, especially if the child is a boy, said Ms. Persson." ■

Emmanuel Kenyi



Chiefs presiding over traditional court in Bentiu. PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

A CHRONOLOGY OF SUDAN'S MULTI-PARTY ELECTIONS

As Sudan approaches elections in 2009, the country looks back on four previous multi-party polls, interrupted by three military coups, since the country gained semi-autonomy from its Anglo-Egyptian rulers in 1953.

In December 1955, parliament decided that Sudan was to be a sovereign, independent state, effective 1 January 1956

The first multi-party election, conducted in 1953 under the Self-government Act (giving Sudan the right to govern itself) under the guidance of Egypt and Britain, revolved around three key views.

The first, held mainly by the National Unionist Party (NUP), supported unity with Egypt. A second, espoused by the UMMA (Nation) Party (UP), felt that Sudan should become a sovereign, independent state. The third view, held by the Southern Liberal Party, promoted a federal system of government.

The NUP won a clear majority in the 1953 elections and formed a government under Ismail Al-Azhari. In December 1955, parliament decided that Sudan was to be a sovereign, independent state, effective 1 January 1956.

Seven months later, a coalition government with Abd Allah Khalil as Prime Minister was formed by the political wings of two northern parties, al-Khatmiyya (People's Democratic Party, PDP) and al-Ansar (UP), which toppled the Al-Azhari government.

During the post-election period, the first concrete sign of a rift in north-south relations appeared and was to have lasting effects. In August 1955, two Southern Sudanese battalions in Torit mutinied after being ordered to join their co-officers in the North to replace the British officers and following the declaration of the Sudanization of the Civil Service.

In November 1958, General Ibrahim Abboud led Sudan's first military coup, dissolving the Khalil government. In October 1964, a popular uprising overthrew the Abboud regime, and a transitional government was put in place under Sir Al-Khatim Al-Khalifa as Prime Minister.

Elections in 1965 gave the UMMA Party the majority of votes and a government

headed by Mohammed Ahmed Al-Mahjoub was set up. However, by the time of the 1965 elections, Southern Sudan was already rebelling against the north for what it perceived as oppression and marginalization. Because of the civil war and insecurity throughout the south, the elections were carried out mainly in the north.

Differences within and between the two major political parties led to further elections being held in 1968. The outcome was that Al Azhari headed the Presidential Council and Al-Mahjoub became Prime Minister after their respective parties, the NUP and the PDP re-united.

In May 1969, Jaafar Nimeiri led a successful military coup, which overthrew the Al-Mahjoub government, and ruled Sudan for 16 years. Multiparty elections were not held during this period.

In 1972, the Addis Ababa peace agreement was signed between Nimeiri's government and leaders of the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement, bringing peace to Sudan for 11 years.

The Addis Ababa agreement collapsed in 1983 after President Nimeiri decided to re-divide the South into three regions, which constituted a breach to the peace agreement. In protest, a battalion of mainly Southern Sudanese soldiers in Bor, under the leadership of John Garang took to the jungle, giving birth to the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement /Army (SPLM/A).

In 1985, the Nimeiri government was overthrown in Khartoum and another transitional authority set up. Elections were held in 1986, bringing into power a coalition government composed of UP

and the Democratic Unionist Party and headed by Sadig al-Mahdi (UP).

Another military coup in June 1989 led by the National Islamic Front brought President Omar Al-Bashir to power. In

In the 2009 elections, both north and south will vote for a joint Government of National Unity and the south for the Government of Southern Sudan

2000, the ruling National Congress Party agreed to resume the talks with leaders of the SPLM. These ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005.

The CPA brought peace to Southern Sudan and other areas like Abyei, Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile. It also gave the south a wider regional autonomy.

In the 2009 elections, both north and south will vote for a joint Government of National Unity and the south for the Government of Southern Sudan. The south will vote again in 2011 in a referendum to determine whether it will continue in unity with the north or secede as a separate state. ■

Taban Kenyi

with inputs from Ayman Mohamed

Election Commission formed

The long-awaited National Election Commission (NEC) was formed and members sworn in on 25 November, with Abel Alier as Chairman and Abdallah Ahmed Abdallah as Deputy Chairman.

Endorsed by Sudan's National Assembly, members of the independent NEC will be responsible for administering, conducting and supervising national and regional elections in Sudan.

Members were chosen by the Government of National Unity's partners, the National Congress Party and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), after consultation with the country's political parties.

The NEC is currently working on forming high elections committees of five members each at the southern and state levels as well as forms and procedures, before settling on the elections date.

The Sudanese government has allocated SDG 900 million of the 2009 budget to general elections, subject to final confirmation.

“HATE THE SIN, NOT THE SINNER”

Diwakar Singh: A man of rare sense

Growing up in the inner city of Delhi, India, Diwakar Singh often witnessed criminals being arrested and hauled away to a nearby jail on his way to school.

Learning that murder, theft and other serious crimes were being committed in his community, Diwakar was inspired at an early age to become a policeman, joining the Indian force in 1986 at the age of 22.

Now 48, Diwakar looks back on 22 years of investigating and arresting national and international criminals, containing organized crime, protecting VIPs, detecting explosives and controlling riots.

Wishing to boost the rule of law further afield, Diwakar joined UNMIS in November 2007, becoming head of UN Police in Bor. “Sudan has been at war for many years ... much needs to be done in training its police,” he said.

Becoming a Community Policing Officer in February of this year, Diwakar introduced a literacy programme for the South Sudan Police Service (SSPS) and social awareness programmes in gender equity, human health, public hygiene as well as drug abuse.

He has formed three police Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) of area leaders trained by UN police to liaise with the local population. PCRCs help curtail crimes by acting as the ears and eyes of the police.

Since May, Diwakar has initiated three Force Protection Unit training courses targeting Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) officers, covering topics like VIP security as well as riot control and management.

Diwakar is a man of rare sense and foresight, throwing out tough topics for debate and presenting insightful solutions, according to the head of the Bor office, Vissnu Soti. He often jumps on stage to give lectures at public meetings or workshops.

“His lectures are motivating and inspiring,” said Mr. Soti, adding that his ability to communicate at a grassroots level had won him the support of Bor’s indigenous people.

Now, under the sponsorship of Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC), a Bangladeshi-based non-governmental organization, Diwakar and his colleagues plan to open an elementary school for children aged 5-to-10. There will also be an adult education programme.

The Polish Humanitarian Organization, funded by the Polish government, will work

hand-in-hand with BRAC to sponsor this special UNMIS Quick Impact Project.

With cattle conflicts and child abductions continuing in Jonglei and Upper Nile, Diwakar also plans to form anti-cattle raid committees in the two states to tackle those problems.

“Children are often abducted and cattle raided. I am going to work with the state authority to see what we can possibly do to reduce such practices,” he said.

Diwakar believes that police should respect suspects and avoid harsh treatment. Formal hearing should be held to determine their guilt or innocence. “What you hate is the sin, not the sinner, so treat the two differently. You cannot judge a suspect as a criminal until he is proven guilty,” he said.

He urged police officers to discharge their duties sincerely if they want to gain recognition. “Don’t look for achievements, but do your work sincerely, and let achievements come to you alone through your hard work.”

Diwakar is married with four children, a boy and three girls. In his leisure time, he enjoys sports, plays and music, especially reggae. He is also an avid reader of novels. ■

“Sudan has been at war for many years ... much needs to be done in training its police”



Diwakar Singh giving lecture to SSPS



Diwakar Singh (centre) issuing certificates to SSPS with Kuol Manyang (left), Governor of Jonglei State

*Story and photos by
James Sokiri*



UNMIS-organized SSPS riot control exercise, Bor

NEWS BRIEFS

Conflict survivors launch network for children in war

A group of former child soldiers and survivors of armed conflict, including two Sudanese, launched on 20 November the Network of Young People Affected by War (NYPAW) to help children whose lives had been derailed by conflict.

An estimated 1.5 billion children – two-thirds of the world's child population – lived in 42 countries affected by violent, high-intensity conflict between 2002 and 2006, NYPAW said in a statement. "Building on our own experiences, NYPAW seeks to speak up for the rights of all these children and to find concrete measures to prevent the use of children in war."

The group includes best-selling authors, renowned musicians, and youth advocates hoping to serve as role models to all those whose lives had been affected by violence. Included are two Sudanese -- Kon Kelei, Spokesperson for War Child Holland, and Emmanuel Jal, worldwide acclaimed hip hop singer.

With guidance from the United Nations, including UNICEF and the Office of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and with the assistance of War Child Holland and the Permanent Mission of Italy to the UN, NYPAW will use education and art – including writing, public speaking, poetry, music, painting, storytelling and theatre – to raise awareness of the plight of children living in conflict zones and provide them with needed support.

Volunteer Day celebrated in Khartoum



International Volunteer Day was celebrated in Khartoum on 5 December under the theme "partnership for achieving the Millennium Development Goals through volunteerism".

The UN Volunteer Programme in Sudan organized a series of activities in Ombadda area in Omdurman, in collaboration with the Sudanese Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the Sudanese Council for Voluntary Agencies, in partnership with Sudanese non-governmental organizations.

More than 70 medical doctors and 10 dentists provided free medical consultations to the community, while workshops were held to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and Female Genital Mutilation. More than 50 UN volunteers participated in an event raising environmental awareness, cleaning the area and recycling oil drums into rubbish bins. In the evening, a concert with Sudanese bands was held at Khartoum's International Cultural Village.

International Volunteer Day was also celebrated in Ed Damazin, Kadugli, Rumbek, Kapoeta and Juba. Currently, a total of 270 UNV volunteers are serving in UNMIS, including 32 Sudanese.

UNMIS gives training on stress



In an effort to help mission staff identify colleagues and community members suffering from stress, UNMIS Counseling and Welfare section held a training session for 24 "peer helpers" at Khartoum headquarters from 24 to 30 November.

"The peer helpers are our ambassadors and engineers in places where there are no counsellors ... they help to ensure that any stress building up is identified before reaching the breaking point," said Staff Counselling and Welfare section chief Brandy McNeill.

She added that UNMIS had also trained five community leaders to identify cases of stress in their areas due to outbreaks of epidemic diseases, infertility, poverty and divorce.

As of 2009, Ms. McNeill said her section would be training peer helpers from other UN agencies and various communities in Sudan. "The more people are trained, the better for Sudan." Her office planned to have counsellors in all parts of Sudan to complement its current 10.

The training course, which drew participants from various parts of Sudan, was conducted by 10 counsellors. Topics covered included stress management, communication skills, psychological first aid, coping with death and loss, grief, working with diverse groups and interventions as well as referrals.

UN prepares to hand over Mine Action to Sudan

The UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) announced on the 30 November that it had jointly developed a transition plan to transfer ownership of the Sudan Mine Action Programme (Sudan-MAP) to the National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) based in Khartoum, and the South Sudan Demining Commission (SSDC) based in Juba.

Other parties engaged in the transition process include the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN Mine Action Service, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and UNICEF.

During a series of workshops, delegates recommended that a transition plan build on "core management responsibilities" of a mine action entity, which include planning and coordination of mine action activities, establishment of national technical standards, quality and information management, accreditation and fund-raising.

National authorities will also be responsible for ensuring Sudan's compliance with international mine-ban and other related treaties, as well as raising awareness of mine threats and assisting victims of landmines.

Transition will consist of three stages -- capacity development; joint activities; and full national ownership by 2011, dependent on extension of the UNMIS mandate. UNMAO will implement an exit strategy while placing key national and international staff among national authorities' technical advisors.

A Memorandum of Understanding demonstrating the commitment of the United Nations and national authorities to the transition of Sudan-MAP should be signed by the end of 2008, with implementation of the first phase of the transition plan as of 1 January 2009.

NEWS BRIEFS

Dinka-Misseriya peace conference held in Aweil



In an effort to promote peaceful co-existence between the Dinka Malual and Misseriya tribes, USAID funded a grassroots peace conference in Aweil, Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, from 11 to 13 November.

Organized by the indigenous non-governmental organization Kush Inc., the conference was attended by more than 400 local chiefs, Dinka and Misseriya community and religious leaders, UNMIS delegates and representatives of non-governmental organizations representatives from Southern Kordofan, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Western Bahr El Ghazal State and Warrap States.

Conference discussions focused on policies needed for grazing or accessibility to water points during the dry season, disarmament, shared development, the return of abducted women as well as children and compensation.

The Dinka Malual promised the Misseriya unhindered access to grazing areas and water points in the south as long as they were unarmed. As a precondition, the Dinka asked that the Misseriya be disarmed before they crossed to Southern Sudan.

The two communities also agreed to form a joint policing group to maintain security in the area and work closely together to maintain peace, security and stability. Participants also agreed to establish a joint retrieval committee of traditional authorities to identify and reunite abducted women and children with their families.

Border committee gets international advice

In an effort to profit from worldwide experiences in laying down boundaries, Sudan's border committee recently met in Juba with the International Boundary Research Unit UK (IBRU).

Opening the event at Home and Away conference centre on 17 November, IBRU's Martin Platt said he hoped the workshop would help the North-South Border Technical Committee avoid conflicts and speed up demarcation.

The opening session was chaired by Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Vice-President Dr. Riek Machar and drew GoSS ministers and representatives of the United Nations as well as diplomatic community.

Dr. Machar said the GoSS considered the workshop vital, especially as people were concerned about north-south border demarcation. "In ... public gatherings and workshops throughout Southern Sudan, people have been raising concerns about north-south border demarcation ... why it has been delayed."

Topics covered included types of borders; boundary negotiation and disputes resolution; and boundary demarcation, maintenance and management. Participants also focused on UN boundary demarcation experiences and viewed maps as well as UN satellite imagery presentations.

Qazi meets with Abyei administration

Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ashraf Qazi visited Abyei on 4 December, as part of a two-day trip to Abyei, Agok and Kadugli.

Mr. Qazi met with Abyei Area Chief Administrator Arop Moyak and his Deputy, Rahama Abdelrahman Al-Nour, at the town's new Civil Administration premises. There, he was briefed on progress with the budget, deployment of the Joint Integrated Unit and Joint Integrated Police Unit and challenges ahead.

"People are beginning to return to Abyei and hope is returning with them", he noted, reiterating UNMIS's readiness to assist the authorities to achieve their priorities.

Mr. Qazi later met with Misseriya and Dinka tribal chiefs at UNMIS Abyei headquarters. With traditional Misseriya migration approaching, all parties are working to ensure it is conducted peacefully.

UN Humanitarian chief visits Sudan



Concluding a six-day visit to Sudan, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes urged improved cooperation between humanitarian workers and the government to assist conflict-affected people in Darfur and elsewhere in the country.

Speaking at a Khartoum press conference on 30 November, Mr. Holmes also stressed the importance of protecting civilians, especially women and children, as well as safety and security for aid workers.

He drew attention to the challenging security environment in Darfur, where 11 aid workers had been killed, 261 vehicles hijacked, 172 premises assaulted, 35 convoys ambushed and looted, 189 staff abducted, 29 wounded and 25 agencies relocated so far this year.

During his visit, Mr. Holmes met with the government, UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations, and donors. He visited all three Darfur states and also met those displaced by violent confrontations in Abyei as well as its new administrator and deputy.

On a two-day visit to Juba, Mr. Holmes was updated on the enormous challenges facing the south. He urged donors to continue funding in meeting critical humanitarian and recovery needs, especially in the health sector, and encouraged the Government of Southern Sudan to step up efforts to provide basic services and develop key sectors, such as agriculture.

