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United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

Halting polio

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DIARY

- **7-8 February:** Chiefs and commissioners of Akobo and Nyirol counties, Jonglei State, met with those of Ulang, Luakpiny and Baliet, Upper Nile State, in Ulang to discuss problems related to the sharing of grazing areas and water resources along the Sobat river during the dry season. Vice-President of Southern Sudan Riek Machar attended the event.
- **12 February:** A Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) roundtable conference was held in Juba's Nyokuron Cultural Centre, bringing together North and South DDR Commissions, high-level government officials, the United Nations and donors, who pledged \$90 million to support the DDR process.
- **24 February:** Fighting erupted in Malakal, Upper Nile State, between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) elements of the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU). During the conflict, more than 60 people were killed and 100 injured.
- **25 February:** The Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Committee and UN Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan arrived in Malakal to help the government resolve the conflict. UNMIS created a buffer zone to separate the SPLA and the SAF and guarded the airport.
- **4 March:** The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The court rejected the accusation of genocide, saying there was insufficient evidence of a specific intent to destroy particular ethnic groups in Darfur.
- **5-6 March:** The authorities expelled 13 international and three local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Darfur and North Sudan, accusing them of passing information to the ICC. The aid groups denied working with the court and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appealed to the government to revoke its decision.
- **8 March:** International Women's Day was celebrated across Sudan with exhibitions, music and readings of the Secretary-General's message, which called for an end to violence against women. UNMIS joined hands with NGOs and UN agencies to observe this year's theme "Women and men united to end violence against women and girls".
- **12 March:** Five staff members of Médecins Sans Frontières/Belgium – two national and three international – were kidnapped by armed men from their office in North Darfur. The two Sudanese nationals were released, while the three remaining international staff were released just before *In Sudan* went to print.



United Nations Mission

InSUDAN

INSIDE

SPECIAL FOCUS: Health

- Halting polio
- Reaching the disabled
- Fighting meningitis and cholera
- How the *wadi* falls



Interview

- Francisco Osler:
A firm commitment to peace

Development

- From Wau *Na'ar* to power
- From three hours to 35 minutes



Economy

- The price of oil

Obituary

- Telling the Sudanese story
- The writings of Al Tayeb Salih

Peace and Security

- Conflict in Malakal - An interview with David Gressly



News Briefs

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Front cover: An elementary school child receives a dose of vaccination. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

Back cover: A woman fetching water along the UNMIS-created buffer zone in Malakal. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

HALTING POLIO

Over nine million children were targeted in a massive polio immunization effort across Sudan

Three-year-old Morjan Edward leaned back and opened his mouth to receive two healing drops of liquid from a polio worker at a vaccination centre in Juba, Southern Sudan.

One of 26 polio cases reported in Southern Sudan since the beginning of 2008, Morjan fell ill with the crippling virus three months ago.

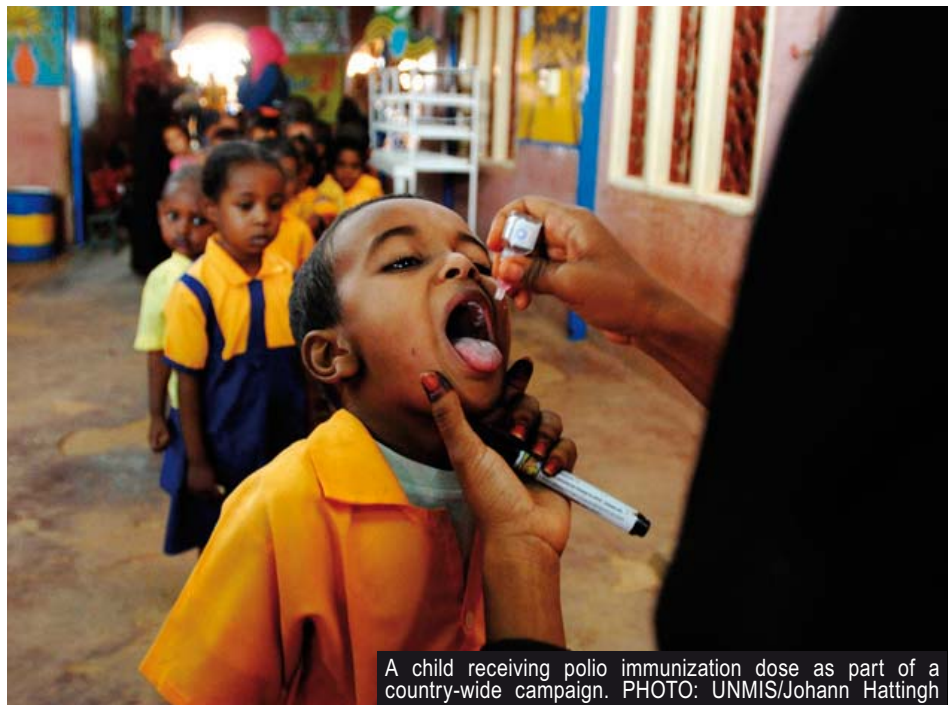
His body heated up with fever and then his hands became so weak he began fumbling with his food, said his mother, Joyce Gune.

Now, Morjan was taking part in a huge polio campaign targeting nine million children under the age of five for immunization across Sudan.

The vast three-day effort, carried out jointly by the Government of National Unity, Government of Southern Sudan, World Health Organization and UNICEF, began on 16 February in Southern Sudan and seven days later in the north.

The campaign aimed especially to halt the wild poliovirus in the south, which had resulted in 26 cases since the beginning of 2008, according to Eva Gordon Soro, the WHO's Focal Point for the Polio Eradication Programme in Southern Sudan.

A wide range of UN agencies and non-governmental organizations worked to immunize some 2.6 million children in the region, Ms. Soro said. The effort was largely funded by the WHO, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Centre for Disease Control (CDC), Rotary International and UNICEF.



A child receiving polio immunization dose as part of a country-wide campaign. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

She noted that the WHO had adopted four key strategies to eradicate polio in Southern Sudan -- EPI (Expanded Programme on Immunization), National Immunization Days, Acute Flaccid Paralysis Surveillance and the Mop-up Immunization Campaign.

Similarly, thousands of immunization team members, leaders and supervisors struggled to deliver vaccines in the north, according to the WHO's Dr. Salah Haithami. "Because of the difficult terrains in Sudan, all types of transportation -- cars, motorcycles, bicycles, camels and donkeys -- were used."

Supervision was carried out by administrative units and localities as well as state and federal employees, the WHO doctor said. Independent monitors generally carried out post-campaign monitoring to check on areas covered and point out any gaps.

As of the first week of March, reports from northern states had shown amazing coverage, with an average result of 99 per cent, said Dr. Haithami. "In absolute figures, it means that 6.23 million children were immunized."

A contagious, historically devastating disease, polio was virtually eliminated from the western hemisphere in the second half of the 20th century, but the virus has persisted in certain parts of Africa.

According to a WHO statement, the constant movement of people across borders has frustrated efforts to wipe out the disease in Sudan. "The origin of some recent polio cases have been traced to neighbouring countries, as porous borders and population movement have helped carry the virus from one country to another." ■

Paiyo Charles Angelo



A black marker is used to distinguish children who had been vaccinated. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

REACHING THE DISABLED

Seventeen-year-old Dar-salaam Abdahmed sat down on a bench in the grey-walled, female physiotherapy room of the National Authority for Prosthetics and Orthotics (NAPO), ready to fit her new prosthesis on.

Ms. Abdahmed has been a regular patient at the Khartoum-based organization catering for the physically disabled for three years, since her right leg was amputated below the knee. With her body still growing, she has had her prosthesis changed about every six months since her operation for mycetoma.

NAPO Deputy Technical Director Mahmoud Haggag said most of the 100-150 people per day who visited the centre (including 20-25 new patients) had become disabled due to polio or mycetoma, also called madura, a chronic, inflammatory disease mainly affecting the foot, which is endemic across Africa.

Although no updated statistics exist on the number of disabled people in Sudan, NAPO Technical Director Gamal Gad believed that the prevalence rate was higher than five per cent of the total population. The figure is below World Health Organization estimates, which put the disability prevalence rate between 7 and 10 per cent.

"If the country's population is 40 million, it means we have to produce at least 200,000 prostheses (artificial limbs) and orthoses (supportive devices) per year. But at present we are capable of producing only about 5,000 per year," Mr. Gad said.

NAPO was established in 1946 to



NAPO workshop offering training in the making of mobility devices. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

produce and provide artificial limbs to World War II victims. Located on 24,000 square metres of Khartoum's industrial area, it is funded by the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs as well as several non-governmental organizations.

The semi-governmental organization provides more than prostheses and orthoses. It also offers physiotherapy, psychological support to disabled persons and instruction in using their mobility appliances.

Exercising his knees under close physiotherapist supervision, Sidahmed Akoud said he had broken both of them a few years ago. He had then received surgery in the United Kingdom, but had returned to Sudan for physiotherapy.

"I tried every clinic in Khartoum,"

Mr. Akoud said, "but the one up to the standard in staff is this one."

Training needed professionals

Working in co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), NAPO launched a three-year diploma course in prosthetics and orthotics in 2008, aiming to produce needed professionals, according to Mr. Haggag.

"We are training 11 students -- one from Darfur, three from south Sudan and seven from Khartoum," ICRC orthotist/prosthetist Achile Otou-Essono added.

Seeing the sizeable waiting room crowded with veiled women and older men with crutches, one could guess at the demand for NAPO's services. The technical director said the number of people on the waiting list was at least as many as those being treated every month.

"As a governmental organization, we are responsible for providing service to all Sudanese people," Mr. Gadd said. "Now we give service to a percentage only. The main challenge is how to improve our productivity, our instruments, our activity to cover all the patients."

Recently, the challenge posed by long distances between the five NAPO satellite clinics in Kassala, Dongola, Kadugli, Nyala and Ed Damazin as well as remote villages was lessened by the launch of a mobile orthopedic workshop.

In the summer of 2008, a Sudanese automotive company donated a truck and \$140,000 for materials and devices to make mobility appliances, allowing NAPO



NAPO patients learning to use their prostheses at the rehabilitation room. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

to organize its first mobile workshop in El Obeid and a second in Atbara. People could then receive professional care and artificial limbs without having to travel long distances.

Besides planning to increase the number of mobile workshops, NAPO was aiming to improve services across the country. In February 2009, it signed a new contract with Handicap International (HI) to renovate its Kadugli clinic and co-operate on a long-term basis.

HI had also been assisting with disabilities in various Southern Sudanese states in co-operation with international health organizations like Merlin and Médecins Sans Frontières. According to HI Project Manager Sylvain Rouaud, the organization shipped 200 wheelchairs to Juba for distribution in their present area of operation, Jonglei State.

A disability survey was needed in the south as well, which the Norwegian Association for the Disabled (NAD) was planning to carry out. "Disability is not inability," NAD Acting Manager Batista Alua Duma said, adding that the association's plans included vocational computer training for disabled persons. When trained, disabled people could become more independent, he said.

Like NAPO, NAD provides mobility devices to the disabled, including tricycles, wheelchairs, crutches, knee pads and caps, leprosy sandals, prostheses and orthoses. It also distributes food to amputees and polio victims in collaboration with the World Food Programme.

"You can see how well people with disabilities can do when supported," Central Equatoria State Minister of Social Development Helen Mursali Boro said, referring to a blind student at the University of Juba who had become a teacher.

The Southern Sudanese state assists the blind with a monthly allowance of 5,000 SDG and the deaf with 1,000 SDG, and offers them training in sign language. The minister named the lack of teachers trained in special needs education as a main challenge.

Realizing this need, the ICRC has sent 16 Southern Sudanese students (two physiotherapists and 14 technicians) for schooling abroad, ICRC technician Mr. Edward Wafula said. In January 2009, the organization opened Southern Sudan's first rehabilitation centre, which provides mobility devices as well as a feeding programme for the disabled.

"When I came, I could not walk but now I can walk like others ... I'm feeling helpful in my community now", said 28-year-old Joseph Nyandy from Pibor County of Jonglei State, who lost his left leg in a landmine accident.

The Physical Rehabilitation Reference

Centre (PRRC) was constructed in Juba by the ICRC in collaboration with the Government of Southern Sudan's Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs. Besides offering outpatient physiotherapy services, PRRC has inpatient wards, which can accommodate 70 male and 50 female patients.

"We have received patients from all the 10 southern states and we have currently 11 males and three females admitted," PRRC Administrator Marino Sebit said. The centre's manager, Dr. Dayson Anbago Dayson, however, remarked that many people have difficulties reaching the centre due to lack of transportation.

Healing on horseback

"There is a lot of stigma. The families keep the disabled children in the house. But more and more you see them," said Jane-Anne Khalid, Coordinator of Miracles Sudan, a non-profit organization providing horse therapy for disabled children.

Horse therapy or hippotherapy offers similar health benefits to physiotherapy, according to Ms. Khalid. But it also moves the entire body of a disabled person and exercises his/her muscles. The movement relaxes tense muscles, and children enjoy the farm environment as well.

Miracles Sudan, located in the Bahri area of Khartoum, grew out of Ms. Khalid's passion to save abandoned, malnourished or sick horses. Now she has 16 horses, of which five are used for the tri-weekly, free hippotherapy sessions.

"About 99 per cent of the children that come here have cerebral palsy," said Ms. Khalid, adding that they received some children with Down's syndrome and autism.



A child with cerebral palsy at Miracles Sudan's horse therapy session. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

Speaking of her organization's achievements, the Englishwoman called a young girl named Hiba a "fantastic example". "When she first came here she was literally like a floppy dog. She couldn't even hold her head up," Ms. Khalid said. After a year's horse therapy and physiotherapy sessions, she could sit on a chair. "Her mother said she loves hippotherapy and it is really a plus to her treatment."

Eszter Farkas with inputs from Ojja Bosco and Taban Kenyi



The Physical Rehabilitation Reference Centre built by ICRC in Juba. PHOTO: UNMIS/Taban Kenyi

FIGHTING MENINGITIS AND CHOLERA



Cholera patients at a treatment centre in Aweil after the floods. PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

Sitting in the middle of the African meningitis belt stretching from Senegal to Ethiopia, amid the dusty, dry and windy weather conditions prevailing in much of the region, Southern Sudan is beset with periodic outbreaks of the airborne illness.

In 2007 alone, 12,000 cases of meningitis, resulting in 600 deaths, were reported across Southern Sudan.

But those figures fell sharply last year. A mere 120 patients were diagnosed with the disease in 2008 and no fatalities were reported. Health experts attribute the drop to a successful immunization

campaign by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in 2007 that vaccinated 500,000 people, along with the increased availability of antibiotics to treat the disease.

"We cannot stop meningitis from occurring in Southern Sudan because of its geographical location," noted Dr. Abdul Wurie, a medical officer for disease prevention and control at the Juba offices of the World Health Organization (WHO). "But we can reduce its incidence through vaccinations, and a quick response in treating any infection can minimize deaths."

Dr. Wurie praises the leadership of the GoSS Ministry of Health and credits this plus the assistance it has received in recent months from the WHO, UNICEF and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Medair and Population Services International (PSI) for the absence of meningitis-caused deaths in 2008.



A child at a treatment centre in Aweil. PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

"There is a quick response by our people on the ground to an outbreak even before we are informed," says the WHO official.

The GoSS Health Ministry also teamed up with the WHO, UNICEF and the NGOs to establish a cholera preparedness and prevention group in 2007.

The group has devised a broad strategy to prevent the spread of cholera and ensure a swift response to outbreaks of the disease in keeping deaths to a minimum. The group seeks to provide safe water and identify high-risk areas especially vulnerable to cholera outbreaks.

UNICEF and other partners have dug borehole wells and built storage tanks in the Southern Sudanese capital of Juba, where water is chlorinated before being distributed to the public. "Once you give people safe water to drink, you are likely to reduce cholera outbreaks significantly," explained Dr. Wurie.

The WHO has worked closely with the GoSS Health Ministry to deliver cholera treatment kits to hospitals and clinics in parts of Southern Sudan where the disease is more likely to occur.

Swiss-based Medair and the Washington-based PSI Sudan have supported the anti-cholera campaign with hygiene-oriented public service announcements and the distribution of chlorine tablets.

"Due to floods and some environmental factors, cholera and meningitis can't be stamped out completely in Southern Sudan," said the WHO medical officer. "But when they break out, we are fully capable of controlling infection and minimizing the number of deaths through the treatment of patients."

Eight deaths in Southern Sudan have been blamed on meningitis thus far during the first quarter of 2009. But more help may be on the way in the fight against the illness, which kills at least 10 per cent of people who are infected by the bacteria that attacks the spinal cord and brain lining.

A new vaccine against the disease will be unveiled in three West African countries later this year, and WHO officials are hopeful the Indian-manufactured product known as meningococcal A, or MenA, could eradicate meningitis worldwide as early as 2020. ■

Emmanuel Kenyi

HOW THE WADI FALLS

Traditional healing has become a popular alternative medicine in Southern Sudan

Abubakar Adam Muhammad Osman learned the practice of traditional medicine from his grandfather. A native of the Blue Nile State capital of Ed Damazin, Mr. Osman has treated patients in various parts of Sudan and seven other African countries for the past 13 years.

Mr. Osman, who began plying his craft in Juba in 2008, diagnoses an illness by throwing *wadi* – an Arabic term for a collection of shells, coins and other objects – on the floor of his square-shaped *tukul* (conical mud and straw hut) and identifies the patient's malady on the basis of how the trinkets fall.

Hardly an orthodox approach to curing disease in a high-tech era of CAT scans and magnetic resonance imaging, but the skullcap-sporting Mr. Osman stoutly defends the herbal remedies he fashions from a wide variety of African plants.

"Sometimes people go to the hospital and complain about not being healed (as they are by) traditional medicine," says Mr. Osman, who bills his patients according to what they can afford. "Hospital medicine is the same as traditional medicine."

While that claim would be ridiculed by most members of the modern medical profession, traditional healers have clearly managed to retain a special niche for themselves in African societies.

The proliferation of hand-painted signs in Juba touting the curative powers of self-styled healers bears witness to their enduring appeal.

With qualified doctors and functioning hospitals in such chronically short supply, ailing residents of Southern Sudan often had no one else to consult during their country's long civil war. The advent of peace in more recent times has lured healers to Juba from as far away as Nigeria and Tanzania.

But this quintessentially homegrown profession is completely unregulated in Southern Sudan. Literally anyone can set up shop and start treating patients, a state of affairs that some Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) officials find troubling.

"The health policy of the GoSS encourages the research and development of traditional medicine," notes Dr. Makur Kariom, the director of reproductive health at the GoSS Ministry of Health. "However, that doesn't mean that it shouldn't be regulated, (and) it is not acceptable or ethical to advertise cures on a billboard or the radio."



Mr. Osman throwing *wadi*. PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

While some practitioners like Mr. Osman rely on word of mouth to bring in new patients, many others have no qualms about hyping their skills to the general public. A poster outside the dirt-floor shack of "Dr." Ali Maji Moto trumpets the healer's ability to "provide solutions to problems" like asthma, syphilis, insanity, cancer, "heamrrhoids" (original spelling) and even bad luck.

The walls of his makeshift clinic are lined with shelves stocked with water bottles containing a thick brown liquid of indeterminate composition. The Tanzania native, whose name in Kiswahili means Dr. Hot Water, says he sees between 15 and 30 patients each day and charges fees ranging from about \$40 for the treatment of malaria cases to around \$120 for fertility-related issues.

Though he confidently asserts his ability to lick most diseases, Mr. Maji Moto does acknowledge the limitations of his know-how in the

case of one very modern and, until now, incurable epidemic.

"AIDS we are not curing," admits the healer, dressed in a white tank top, khaki shorts and brown leather cowboy hat. "But we can treat (AIDS patients) and (they) can stay (alive) for a long time."

The apparently thriving practices of Mr. Osman and Mr. Maji Moto pose a dilemma of sorts for public health authorities in Southern Sudan.

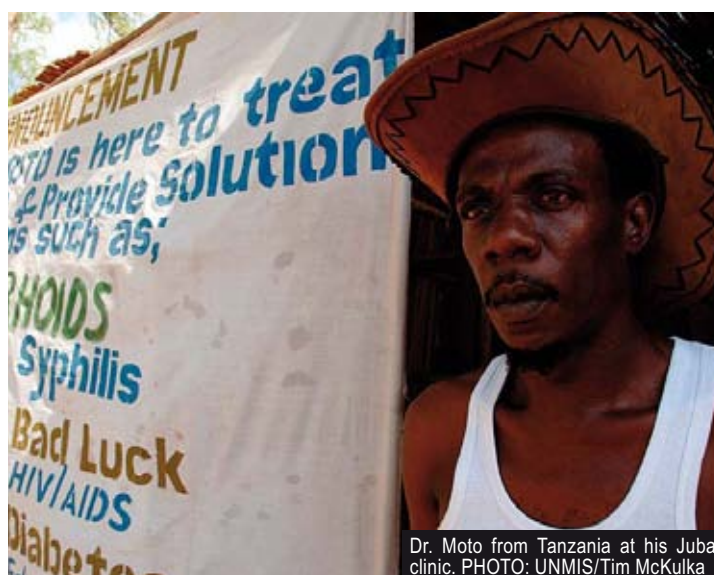
They fully understand the appeal of the neighbourhood medicine man in a region cursed with such woefully inadequate health care infrastructure. And Dr. Kariom of the GoSS Health Ministry gives traditional medicine practices a qualified endorsement -- provided that the right safeguards and standards are put in place.

"If it is based on scientific research and evidence, professional practice in herbal medicine has a place, it can provide an alternative," he says. "But the policy (of encouraging traditional medicine) is being abused. We want doctors to come in, but they must fulfill criteria before they practice in Southern Sudan."

Where Mr. Kariom's ministry will find qualified people to license such practitioners raises another set of challenges. "We don't have people with the experience to assess and validate those who claim to have knowledge in traditional or herbal medicine," he concedes.

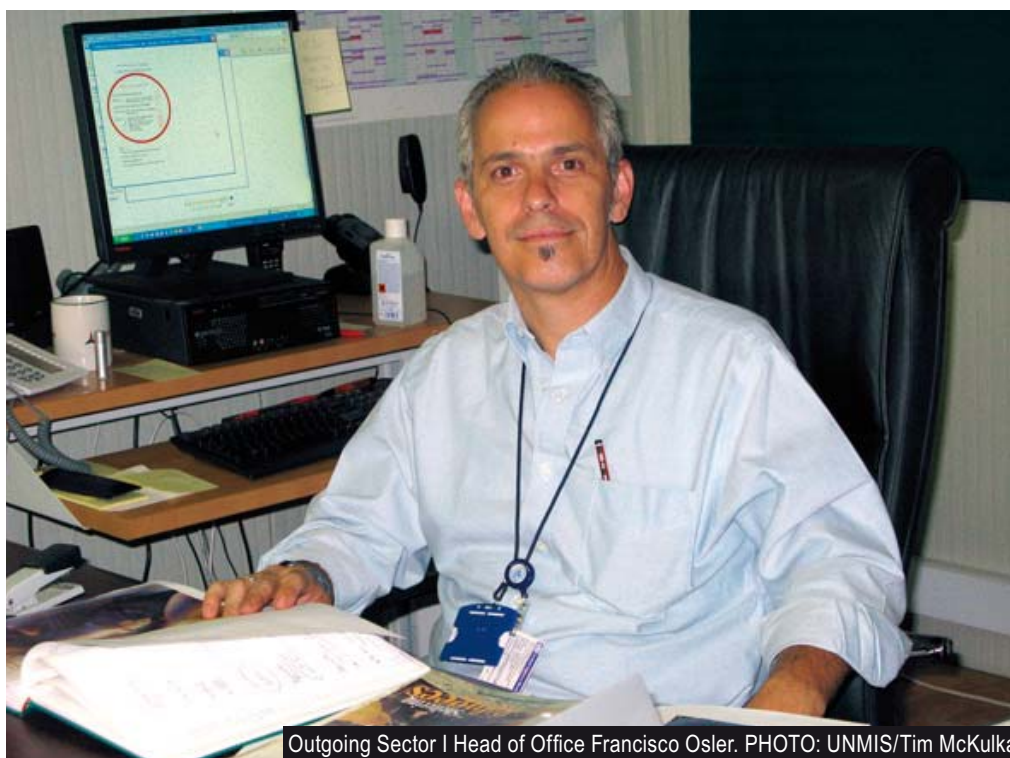
That has the makings of a major regulatory headache that no *wadi*-tossing healer can ever cure. ■

Tim McKulka



Dr. Moto from Tanzania at his Juba clinic. PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

A FIRM COMMIT



Outgoing Sector I Head of Office Francisco Osler. PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

Former Brazilian foreign affairs official Francisco Osler recently concluded a 16-month stint as Head of Office for UNMIS Sector I, which comprises the Southern Sudanese states of Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria. In Sudan spoke with Mr. Osler at his Juba office before he took up his new duties in February as Sector II Head of Office based in Wau.

In Sudan: What does the job of a sector head of office entail?

Francisco Osler: A head of office (HoO) is responsible for implementation of the UNMIS mandate in his or her geographic sector. The HoO is the highest UNMIS officer in the sector. There's a lot of management as well.

So if our mandate is to monitor and support implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), each one of us is responsible for that in our respective area. Overall challenges for the mission's implementation plan are basically the same, but we have specific ones according to the sector or region.

Now that I'm moving up to Sector II (comprising Warrap, Lakes, Western Bahr el Ghazal and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states), the challenges there will be different. We have demarcation of the border (between northern and southern Sudan), we have migration issues, but

they're all related to the mandate, the CPA and its different protocols.

What have your sector's main accomplishments been since you arrived in 2007?

We had a main office here in Juba and five team sites in the sector -- in Juba and Yei in Central Equatoria, in Torit in Eastern Equatoria and in Yambio and Maribi in Western Equatoria. In Juba, we have both the headquarters of the regional office and the headquarters of Sector I, and we needed to make a clear distinction between the two.

The relationship between UNMIS and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) as a semi-autonomous entity is the responsibility of the Regional Coordinator, David Gressly. He represents UNMIS before the GoSS. Sector I works with the three states of Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria, so as the head of office I represent UNMIS before the governors of those states.

The biggest challenge was to make a distinction between the sector office and the regional office because of the different levels of intervention, and now we have a clearly defined sector office and a clearly defined regional office.

What are some other achievements?

We consolidated a more important

civilian presence outside Juba. With my arrival, we established a mechanism of regular meetings with the three governors and the officials of their state governments. We also increased our permanent civilian presence in the state capitals of Yambio, Torit and Juba.

That enabled UNMIS to interact in a more meaningful way with the three states on different issues. For example, the mechanism of regular meetings facilitated the work of the Civil Affairs section in dealing with their main issues like political space, governance and conflict management resolution. It facilitated the work of the Human Rights section in their dealings with the local authorities. And it facilitated a consolidated approach with Recovery, Return and Reintegration because some of their government counterparts are based at the state level.

What are the main challenges facing your successor as Sector I head of office during the remaining two years of the transitional period established by the CPA?

One is preparations for elections and then for the referendum. Those will be huge, huge tasks.

Bigger than anything you tackled during your 16 months as head of office?

Definitely. And in the meantime, a recurring activity is the support we give to institutions which are not within the main mandate of UNMIS. When we interact with the UN Country Team, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other UN agencies, we come in to support government institutions on the ground. For example, in conflict resolution we normally work with a minister of local government together with the UNDP. We deal with the ministry of finance at the state government level on budget matters and civil service issues.

In December, you visited the Western Equatoria state capital of Yambio three days before a joint military offensive was launched against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in the neighbouring

MENT TO PEACE

Democratic Republic of the Congo. Thousands of Congolese refugees have streamed into Southern Sudan since then, and nearly 29,000 local residents have been displaced by LRA attacks on this side of the border. To what extent was your work in the region disrupted by the anti-LRA military operation?

At the time of the visit, we were in Yambio preparing with state governor Jemma Nunu Kumba for the re-location of the refugees, and in the middle of this operation the multinational offensive against the LRA began. We basically stopped our work because our access to the border areas was cut off.

So the anti-LRA operation halted the refugee re-location process in midstream?

It didn't halt it 100 per cent, but it slowed that process.

Did this entire episode represent a major setback to CPA implementation in Western Equatoria?

No. It was a setback in terms of security conditions and dealing with the refugee population. But not for implementation of the CPA.

How has Juba changed as a city since you first arrived?

When I arrived here, there wasn't a single paved road. Now we see all these paved roads, and we see many more government buildings. With the influx of returnees and people coming from different parts of the country, we definitely see a difference in behaviour.

That has generated responses like the issuance of a local order in Juba last year that restricted certain kinds of dress, which clearly showed the effects of all these people coming back with different behaviours and habits.

At the level of Central Equatoria State, the government has become much more active and capable. We see, for example, that the Southern Sudan Police Service is much more in charge of security (in Juba).

You served in UN peacekeeping missions in Mozambique, Angola, East Timor and Haiti before coming to Sudan. How does UNMIS compare with some of those other missions?

My first mission was in Mozambique, where both the government and the RENAMO insurgents had already decided to sign a peace agreement because they did not have the resources to continue to fight. They basically had no other option, and within a couple of years the road map of the peace process was implemented quite smoothly and basically on time.

Angola was a much more difficult case because both the government and the UNITA rebels had access to resources in 1995. So while there was no physical confrontation between the two parties, neither was fully committed to implementation of the peace agreement.

Does Sudan fall somewhere in between those two extremes?

No, I don't think so. Despite the difficulties here, I think there is a firm commitment to peace and implementation of the CPA. At least that is what I sense in the three states of Equatoria region.

When the CPA was signed, we had a government in the south that

was basically two people -- the late GoSS President John Garang and then Vice-President Salva Kiir. We're now four years into this transitional period and we have ten fully constituted state governments in Southern Sudan with their own ministries, legislative assemblies and institutions. You can't expect them to be fully operational, but given the size of the government they've installed and the capacity they currently have, it's something that we really should appreciate.

That's a success in your view?

Yes, I think it's a big, big achievement. If we talk about the LRA incursions into Southern Sudan, we now see a Sudan People's Liberation Army that is much more organized to contain their movements. Although we did have casualties and abductions in Southern Sudan after the launching of the anti-LRA operation in December, the level of atrocities committed by the rebels in Sudanese territory is much, much lower than was the case with previous LRA incursions. The Southern Sudanese still have a long, long way to go, but you definitely see a positive difference in all institutions of the rule of law. ■



FROM WAU NA'AR TO POWER

With electric light falling on the pages of his school textbook and a whirling fan to cool him, Lete Gabriel now ploughs through his evening studies in comfort.

Until just recently, the 17-year-old Wau student struggled to read under the flickering light of a lantern, sitting in his compound under a mango tree to escape the suffocating heat.

Life changed dramatically for Gabriel and his fellow students after Wau began installing electrical power in the town last November. "Now, we have light ... I can read and write my notes any time, including in the evening," said Gabriel.

Wau's new power station was officially inaugurated on 17 February by Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) President Salva Kiir. The ceremony was

weather is normally cooler then."

A historical settlement on the western bank of the River Jur, Wau is the largest town in Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal states. It suffered heavy damage during the 21-year-long civil war, but is now going through considerable economic change, thanks to the new found surge of electrical power.

Several new businesses, including hotels, restaurants, supermarkets and garages as well as metal and woodworking shops have opened up. Business people from neighbouring counties and states, including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda and Kenya, have moved into the town.

Hotel owner Senait Muhe, a 37-year-old Ethiopian, said that she had used a costly, profit-eating diesel generator last year to power her

premises. Now that the town has its own power source, she has managed to open a second hotel.

Electrification of the town, she said had significantly improved her business environment. "We manage to provide quality services like electric fans to our customers in all rooms ... every thing is far better now," she said.

24-year-old James Deng is a Sudanese barbershop owner who, just like Ms. Muhe, used to operate his business in the heart of Wau with a costly generator. Prior to the town's electrification Mr. Deng used to close up shop early evening but, he said, things had changed since.

"Business is good now and I can keep my shop open till late evening. We have a lot of customers as people are normally free after business hours and visit our shop," he said.

Asmait Elias, a 48-year-old Eritrean,

recently brought her restaurant business to Wau from Rumbek. "I came here after the electrification of the town, which is very important for business. Now we are getting 24-hour electric service," Asmait said.

More Egyptian-funded power projects are to be inaugurated in the near future in Jonglei State (Bor), Western Equatoria state (Yambio) and Lakes state (Rumbek), according to Ernesto Bol Acho, Southern Sudan Electric Corporation (SSEC) Area Manager in Wau.

During his delegation's visit to Wau, Egyptian Minister of Electricity Hassan Ahmed Younis laid the cornerstone of the Egyptian Schools Complex in the town. He noted that it was one of a number of development projects covering health, education, electricity and information needs that Egypt plans to fund in the area.

After hours of intent concentration made possible by the newly installed electric lights, Lete Gabriel closed his books and gazed contentedly out the window at his changed neighbourhood.

Electric light bulbs shining from every home seemed to compete with Wau's star-lit night sky. Bakeries, barber shops and garages that previously went dark at sunset now roared on late into the evening.

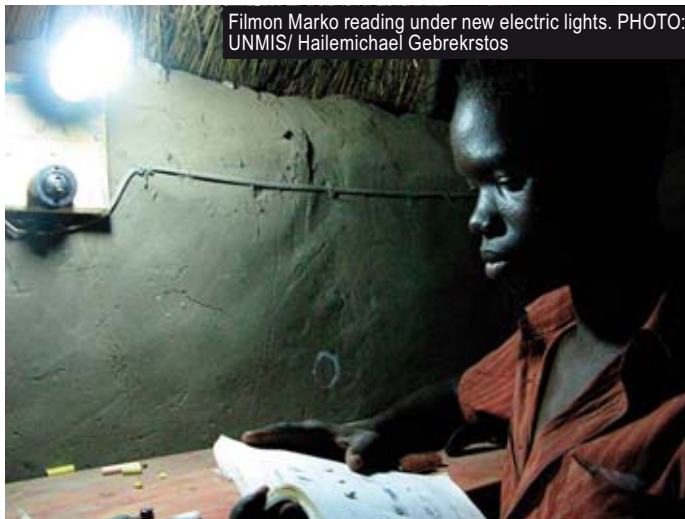
"Now, I can say that Wau is...wow!" said Gabriel with elation.

It is as though electrification of Wau was inspired by the state government's Arabic motto -- "Wau Na'ar, Wau Nur, Wau Mainum" (Wau is fire, Wau is light and Wau never sleeps).

Indeed, Wau na'ar has now turned to Wau power. ■



President Salva Kiir and Egypt's Electricity Minister Hassan Ahmed Younis open the new power station. PHOTO: UNMIS/Hailemichael Gebrekrstos



Filmon Marko reading under new electric lights. PHOTO: UNMIS/ Hailemichael Gebrekrstos

attended by a delegation from Egypt, which funded the \$8 million, 2,000 kilowatt facility.

"We are here today to inaugurate the station and to express our gratitude to the Egyptian government," Mr. Kiir told the huge crowd of townspeople gathered on the banks of the Jur River to witness the inauguration.

The GoSS President stressed that electrical power, by then reaching almost two-thirds of the town, was key to rapid development. Congratulating the people of Wau, he said the new found electricity supply would be "a catalyst for development in the area."

Filmon Marko, a 14-year-old student attending the ceremony, said the new power station was a milestone for all students in the Wau area. "We have electricity at home now.... and I have been enjoying my studies at night because the

Hailemichael Gebrekrstos

In Sudan.UNMIS.March 2009

FROM THREE HOURS TO 35 MINUTES

A new road in Western Equatoria State has cut travel time and spurred development

Though its territory is slightly larger than that of France and Belgium combined, Southern Sudan is host to less than 50 kilometres of paved road.

Its 3,570 kilometres of improved, unpaved roads is a fraction of the 54,300 kilometres of comparable roads criss-crossing neighbouring Kenya, a country that has roughly the same area as the ten states of southern Sudan.

The upgrading of an existing road in the region to all-weather status is therefore a genuine cause for celebration, and Southern Sudan's Western Equatoria State is no exception.

Under the USAID-funded Sudan Infrastructure Program, 22 kilometres of road linking the state capital of Yambio

took three hours can now be completed in a mere 35 minutes, and the cost of travel in a minibus between those towns has fallen from 20 Sudanese pounds per passenger two years ago to only five pounds today.

The project has also generated new job opportunities in the construction sector. The three companies that have been contracted for the road rehabilitation – Ayat, Civcon and Kirinyaga – have provided the local workforce with up to 8,000 labour days each month since February of last year.

The project has brought some good news for a change to Western Equatoria, which has been battered by marauding gunmen from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), who crossed into Southern Sudan

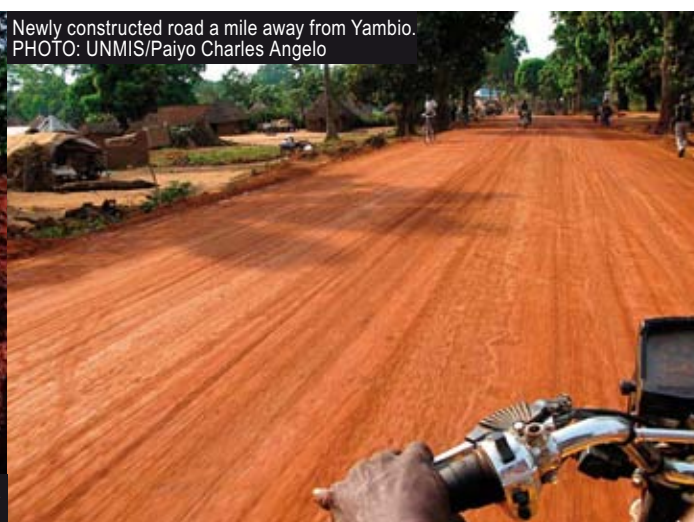
One of the companies that stands to benefit significantly from improved highway conditions is a teak logging firm that runs a roadside tree plantation in Nzara County. More stores are being opened in both Nzara and Yambio counties in anticipation of increased commercial activity in the coming months.

The current road development project is the third such undertaking in the history of Western Equatoria. Some of the state's first roads were opened by the British during the colonial era, and a second road construction campaign was launched after the signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa peace accords.

But the outbreak of civil war in 1983 brought that programme to a screeching



Beginning of the road construction in Western Equatoria State. PHOTO: UNMIS/Paiyo Charles Angelo



Newly constructed road a mile away from Yambio. PHOTO: UNMIS/Paiyo Charles Angelo

to seven miles beyond the town of Nzara have been rehabilitated by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

UNOPS conducted a technical survey for the project and is monitoring and evaluating the quality of the work done by private construction companies that have been awarded contracts to improve the road.

The segment of road between Nzara and the town of Tambura near the border with the Central African Republic will also be upgraded in coming months. "Once completed, this road will benefit the counties that the road traverses, namely Yambio, Nzara, Ezo and Tambura," said UNOPS project manager Surrendra Singh.

The positive impact of the road rehabilitation program on travel times and transportation costs is already being felt. The trek from Yambio to Nzara that once

in the final days of 2008 to escape a joint military offensive against the LRA inside neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo. Over 100 residents of the state have reportedly been killed by LRA rebels since mid-December.

"Though the state started with several problems such as the ... LRA and the inter-tribal fighting which emerged over grazing land in Yambio and Mundri soon after the signing of the CPA ... the inhabitants have tried their best to make the state look like it is now," notes Yambio resident Bullen Kparanginzo.

The road rehabilitation programme has also helped to hone the technical skills of the state's Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and boosted interest in the local economy among foreign and Sudanese investors. "There can't be development without good roads," said Mr. Kparanginzo.

halt before a road could be extended to Tambura.

The state government has acquired two trucks and a steamroller for minor maintenance of the Nzara-Yambio artery as well as key roads within the state capital, says Western Equatoria deputy governor Joseph Ngere Paciko. The state government will continue to provide security to private road building companies to allay their concerns about LRA activity in the area. ■

Paiyo Charles Angelo

THE PRICE OF OIL

Largely dependent on oil to fuel its rapidly developing economy, Sudan could be hit by the recent sharp drop in crude prices, experts say.

While the country as a whole depends on oil for 62 per cent of its revenues, the semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) relies on it for as much as 98 per cent.

"The effect (of the price drop) on the budget will be drastic, especially in the south," said Government of National Unity (GoNU) State Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Lual Deng.

The 2009 national budget had counted on prices of \$50 per barrel for the country's prime Nile Blend (down from \$75 in 2008) and \$30 for the lesser Dar Blend when it was passed last December, Mr. Deng said. But by the first week of March, the prices for each type of oil had fallen about \$15 further.

The GoNU could collect taxes or borrow from the Central Bank to make up the budget shortfall, the State Minister said, although public spending would still be curbed. "Salaries have not been touched so far, but other costs have been affected, like foreign missions, official functions, car purchases and fuel consumption."

But the GoSS was in a tighter spot,

with no taxation system yet in place. Damaged by the country's 21-year civil war, the Southern Sudan revenue mechanism was still recovering, while GoSS is in need of capacity training, said Aggrey Tisa Sabuni, Under Secretary for Planning in the GoSS Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

"It (the GoSS) has to rely on the oil revenue for its operational and development budgets," Mr. Sabuni said. With fewer oil revenues coming in, the region had cut its budget by almost a third from 5.5 billion SDG in 2008 to 3.6 billion SDG for the current year.

Some southern states were seeking other means of meeting their mounting expenses. Eastern Equatoria had set up a State Revenue Authority that would soon collect taxes within the state and at border points, according to State Director General for Finance, Trade and Industry Jeffery Von Otto.

The lower oil price had also forced southern states to slash spending on luxury goods, including expensive cars unsuited for the region's rough roads, noted Eastern Equatoria State Minister for Finance, Trade and Industry Tulio Odongi Ayahu.

Despite the GoNU revenue fallback, some economists felt it would face the same financial straits as the southern government. "They are in the same boat," said Khalid Tijani Elnour, Editor-in Chief of the economic weekly *Elaff*. "The government (GoNU) has few alternatives to compensate the drop in revenues. Raising taxes or customs duties could lead to recession."

The decreased price would also cut down on hard currency coming in, hurting the country's ability to import goods for development, said Mr. Elnour. "The government will not have enough for road construction and food could also be a problem. Last year Sudan imported almost \$1 billion worth of food items."

Khartoum Stock Exchange Advisor Ali Abdalla Ali said development had already suffered due to the country's overdependence on oil, which had created a "mental attitude" change. "With the oil, less attention was paid on other industries like agriculture and agro industries ... maybe also copper mining and gum Arabic. Fewer funds were pumped into them," said Mr. Ali.

Sudan had previously exported 400,000 tons of ground nuts per year, for instance, compared to the severely curtailed 20,000 it sent out now, Mr. Ali



Oil well and pumping station at Al Regad oil field north of Bentiu. PHOTO: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

said. Similarly, cotton exports in 1990 had brought in about \$174 million, but had decreased to only \$62 million by 2002.

State Minister Deng concurred that agriculture had taken a back seat to oil, which made up 95 per cent of exports from 2007 to 2008. He said the World Bank had been warning Sudan since 2006 that it was "catching the Dutch disease", referring to the Netherlands' heavy dependence on oil during the 1970s.

But Mr. Deng disagreed that the lower oil price would affect development, insisting that it would be financed through outside borrowing. For example, he said, the GoNU borrowing \$1.5 billion from China would help ensure that development works were not interrupted. ■

CW/OB

Oil prices were continuing to fluctuate as In Sudan went to print.

Where oil money goes

Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), revenues from oil-producing wells in Southern Sudan are shared as follows. After paying two per cent each to oil-producing Unity, Upper Nile and Southern Kordofan states and to the Oil Revenue Stabilization Account, the revenue is divided equally (50-50 per cent) between the GoNU and northern states and the GoSS.

Of the oil produced in Abyei, two per cent each goes to the Dinka and Misseriya tribes, while another two per cent each is given to Southern Kordofan and Warrap states.

In 2008, about 156 million barrels of oil were produced, of which 102 million went to the governments and 54 million to contractors. About 80 per cent was exported and the rest given over to local consumption. Total export revenue during the heyday oil prices of 2008 was about \$7 billion, compared to a total of \$3.7 billion for 2005, 2006 and 2007 combined.

TELLING THE SUDANESE STORY

Thousands of Sudanese people gathered in the Omdurman area of Khartoum to pay their last respects to the world renowned Sudanese novelist and writer Al Tayeb Salih on 20 February.

Mr. Salih's death, as the Sudanese Poet Mohamed Al Makki Ibrahim puts it, left a heavy burden for Sudanese writers to bear. They were faced with the vast task of telling the Sudanese story, which had always come from Mr. Salih's agile pen.

"This is undeniably a great loss. The sole compensation lies in his eternal writings, which transformed Sudanese literature from the local stage, thus adding artistically to the universal," said Mansour al Soweim, a Sudanese novelist and winner of the 2005 Al Tayeb Salih Prize, awarded to young novelists.

Mr. Salih's works as well as personal characteristics, morals and views were subjects of debate in many publications and cultural forums, to an extent described by the Sudanese short story writer and literary critic Issa Al Hilu as "a new trend in the criticism".

"By his unique ingenious narration, Salih stands as an indication of the creative abilities of Sudanese writers"

He helped bring the culture and humble settings of villages in northern Sudan to the international reader. "His works embody a great symbolic significance, not only for young writers but for all generations of Sudanese novelists. By his unique ingenious narration, Salih stands as an indication of the creative abilities of Sudanese writers," Mr. Soweim said.

Al Tayeb Salih's writing centres on people and their complex relationships. Some critics say he dealt with themes of reality and illusion, occidental and oriental cultures and values. The importance of his writing, according to Mr. Al Hilu, is that he tackled the real cultural crisis – namely, alienation during the postcolonial era.

In 2002, his masterpiece *Season of Migration to the North* (first published in 1966), was ranked by a group of 100 writers from over 54 countries among the

The writings of Al Tayeb Salih

best 100 fiction works in history, placing it alongside fiction by Jeffrey Chaucer, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Tolstoy, Charles Dickens, Najeeb Mahfouz, Chinua Achebe and others. In 2001, it was declared by a panel of Arab writers to be the most important Arabic novel of the 20th century.

"*Season of Migration to the North* is an in-depth and transparent historical summary of what the third world had witnessed," Mr. Al Hilu said.

The acclaimed novel has been the subject of numerous critical monographs, journal articles and critical anthologies as well as master and doctoral theses worldwide. It has also formed part of educational curricula in schools and academic institutions in several countries.

Researcher Danny Yee suggests that *Season of Migration to the North* is complex -- in its framing, episodic style, use of metaphor and variety of material. It touches on colonial arrogance, sexual mores and the status of women as well as the politics of independent Sudan.

Remarkably, many critics have attempted to find similarities between Mr. Salih and his characters. Some argue that he resembles Mustafa Saeed. The author himself said he resembled Zein (hero of *The Wedding of Zein*) more than any one of his characters.

The Wedding of Zein was made into an Arabic film, winning an award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1976.

Among Mr. Salih's other well-known works are *Bandar Shah* and *The Dour Tree of Wad Hamid*. Mr. Al Hilu wrote in Al Ray Al Aam newspaper on 25 February, "Salih, in an interview, told the Sudanese poet Elias Fath Al Rahman that he considered *Bandar Shah* more important than *Season of Migration to the North*."

This year, Al Tayeb Salih was nominated by the General Union for Sudanese Writers as the novelist to win



the 2009 Nobel Prize for Literature. In 2002, he won the Mohamed Zafzaf Prize for Arab Literature in Assila, Morocco. In 2005, he won the prize awarded by the third session of the novel forum in Cairo.

Mr. Salih was born in 1929 in a small village in Northern Province. After graduating from Gordon College (University of Khartoum), he travelled to the United Kingdom, where he received a degree in international relations.

He worked as a teacher and then occupied various high positions in the BBC Arabic Service, the Ministry of Information in Qatar and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. He also wrote a weekly column in the London-based Arab magazine *Al Majalla*. ■

Ayman Mohamed

CONFLICT IN MALAKAL

Fighting broke out in Malakal on 24 February between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) elements of the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU), leaving about 60 dead and 103 injured, including soldiers and civilians. To learn more about the conflict, In Sudan spoke with Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly.

In Sudan: What exactly happened in Malakal on 24 February?

David Gressly: What happened was that Gen. Gabriel Tanginya returned to the town after several years of absence, which disturbed the local authorities. There is an outstanding arrest warrant for him by the Government of Southern Sudan, which caused a local reaction.

What was done to resolve the crisis?

The Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) met in an emergency session to review the situation with the UN, SPLA and SAF. They agreed that Gen. Tanginya should leave Malakal to ease tensions and that UNMIS should provide transport for him.

What happened after that was a little unclear, but he didn't leave that first night. His whereabouts were unknown, which increased tensions and led to continued fighting.

The CJMC then went to Malakal to try to disengage the forces and bring about a secession of hostilities, but were unable to land that day (24 February) because of problems with security at the airport.

On 25 February, a team of senior SAF and SPLA officers, along with CJMC members and myself were able to land in Malakal. We met on arrival with the State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and (GoSS) and Vice-President Riek Machar. The Vice-President had already arranged for the departure of Gabriel Tanginya.

What was UNMIS' main contribution in mitigating the conflict?

We used the CJMC to try to resolve the initial problem (the presence of Gen. Tanginya), although the fighting did not immediately stop. The CJMC and other senior army officers, working together with the governor and Vice-President on

the ground, were able to communicate clearly and quickly with their respective forces and disengage them.

A buffer zone was set up between the two forces to help ensure there wouldn't be continued violence between them. We set up a programme of monitoring and verification to ensure that both parties were complying.

We will also be requesting containers to lock up the guns, so they will not be



Women fetching water along the UNMIS-created buffer zone in Malakal. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

available for use by the two armies. And we worked to protect civilians caught in the middle of the conflict. The UNMIS sector commander helped an orphanage by providing food and water and transporting people out for medical treatment.

We ensured that appropriate Southern Sudan support was in place to help mitigate both the conflict and its impact on Malakal's population. Our engineers helped restore electrical poles knocked down during the fighting. OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) became involved, assisting with humanitarian needs.

What is your analysis of the current situation?

People are returning to the town now, which suggests they feel more

comfortable about security. We will continue to monitor compliance of the agreements reached, including the non-movement of soldiers in uniform with weapons in town, and report violations.

Other measures include joint patrols with the Southern Sudan Police Service to ensure continued operations at the airport.

Will the UN continue to operate in Malakal?

Absolutely. We have not left Malakal. The military is very active and OCHA brought in more people to support the humanitarian operation. UNMIS staff continued to work throughout the entire conflict and will continue for an indefinite period of time.

This was the second time Gabriel Tang's fighters engaged the SPLA. What is UNMIS doing to ensure that a similar incident does not occur in future?

The problem this time was a conflict between the components of the JIU. I think the agreement that has come out through the CJMC provides appropriate responses. These include the disengagement of forces, with emphasis on the JIU rotation out of existing personnel, and greater efforts by the Joint Defence Board to support training, equipping and discipline of JIU forces.

We will continue to support the monitoring of that decision. I will be advising both parties and encouraging them to do what's necessary to bring this issue to a conclusion. ■

NEWS BRIEFS



Women's Day celebrated in Khartoum. PHOTO: UNMIS/Johann Hattingh

International Women's Day celebrated across Sudan

In a message read out on International Women's Day celebrations across Sudan on 8 March, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that violence against women was an attack on the foundation of civilization.

Addressing this year's theme "Women and Men United to End Violence Against Women and Girls", the Secretary-General said, "Women bear and care for our children. In much of the world they plant the crops that feed us."

UNMIS Khartoum organized a celebration jointly with Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman on 6 March, attended by more than 4,000 people. Addressing this year's theme, Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary-General Ameerah Haq spoke about the UN's commitment towards women's empowerment.

The Day was celebrated on 10 March at UNMIS Headquarters in Khartoum with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ashraf Qazi reading the Secretary-General's message. Paintings and books were also on display and a documentary on violence against women was shown.

In Upper Nile State, the celebration was organized with UNMIS assistance in the compound of the General Women's Union in Malakal. In Blue Nile State the day was observed by a joint celebration of UNMIS, UNHCR and GOAL as well as local organizations and community leaders.

Nairobi meeting urges "green" approach to peacekeeping and aid

Military and civilian aid experts at a recent UN-backed meeting in Nairobi emphasized the need for peacekeepers and aid agencies to take a "green" approach in their work to protect the environment and the long-term livelihoods of communities affected by conflict.

The 11 March gathering at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters was co-organized by the UN Department of Field Support, UNMIS, the Swedish Defence Research Agency and the Environmental Law Institute.

Participants pointed to studies showing that the demand for such critical natural resources as wood and water by peacekeepers can often be significant, straining vulnerable environments.

But this demand could be considerably curbed through better planning and management, including the use of new technologies that guarantee water and energy efficiency or construction methods minimizing deforestation, they noted.

UNMIS, with the support of the Swedish Government, is investing \$5 million in environmentally-friendly operations for its 10,000 troops in 25 bases. As part of this pilot programme, the mission is using new ways of treating waste and using both water and energy more efficiently, with the goal of reducing the volume of waste by 60 per cent, water consumption by 30 per cent and energy expenditure by 25 per cent.

Juba storm kills 5, injures 22

A heavy thunder storm on 9 March in the Lologo area of Juba, Southern Sudan, killed five people and injured 22, two of them critically.

Those killed were struck by lightning in Lologo market. Two others were critically injured. The storm also blew the roof off the Lologo prison training centre, injuring 14 trainees. Five of the trainees were critically injured and admitted to Juba Teaching Hospital.

The storm destroyed the training centre's 40 accommodation tents and severely damaged a coremec, pre-fabricated building. The prison clinic roof and the main prison building were also damaged.

At the time of the storm, some 289 prison officers were attending an UNMIS/GoSS basic middle management training course at the centre. The Lologo centre is the main training locale for prisons in Southern Sudan. Damage to the centre may have set back efforts to expand prison capacity building.

The UN Development Programme had built a classroom and an administrative block for the centre and had provided the 40 tents that the storm destroyed.

Pakistanis assisting with DDR

The UNMIS Pakistani Contingent has been labouring behind the scenes to help make ongoing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) a success in Ed Damazine, Blue Nile State.

In preparation for the event, Pakistani engineers worked for almost a month to set up the DDR camp. They built sentry posts for the site and set up about 25 tents for security and verification of combatants, medical testing, a bank and the World Food Programme.

DDR began 10 February with Pakistani medical personnel providing medical tests and examinations for combatants. Contingent soldiers are providing DDR site security as well as for combatants being transported from the assembly area. They also provide transport for the combatants from the assembly area to site and back.

As of 3 March, some 461 combatants from the 21-year north-south civil war had been demobilized in Ed Damazine. The DDR programme in Blue Nile State alone aims to demobilize about 5,000 out of an overall figure of 180,000 combatants.



Prison training centre damaged due to the storm. PHOTO: UNMIS/Emmanuel Kenyi



C.O.S. Col. Jeremy Drage, Force Commander Maj. Gen. Paban Thapa and Sector Commander Col. Zavar Hussain. PHOTO: UNMIS

