



September/October 2008

United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

Living on The RAILS

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DIARY

- **4 August:** A two-day public information campaign on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was organized by UNMIS Conduct and Discipline Unit with Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman. The UN Development Fund for Women, UNAIDS and the International Organization for Migration also contributed to the event.
- **6 August:** The UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) announced that it had successfully cleared Abyei of unexploded ordinance. On the same day, UNMAO tasked the Egyptian Military Demining Company to destroy a stockpile of 4,800 abandoned munitions.
- **8 August:** The Beijing Olympic Games kicked off in China. Sudan's delegation competed mainly in track and field events. Ismail Ahmed Ismail won a silver medal in the final men's 800 metre race.
- **9 August:** UNMIS welcomed the Presidential decree appointing Arop Moyak Mony of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and Rahama Abdelrahman Al-Nour of the National Congress Party as Chief Administrator and Deputy Administrator, respectively, of the interim Abyei Area Administration.
- **18 August:** The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sudan, Ashraf Qazi, briefed the Security Council on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Mr. Qazi pointed out that implementation had remained on track, but said the foundation for durable peace was still fragile.
- **23 August:** UN Radio Miraya marked its second anniversary of broadcasting in Sudan with a "peace concert". Sudanese musicians were invited to perform in Juba and the concert was broadcast live on the radio.
- **26 August:** UN Police and the UN Development Programme concluded a ten-day Police Basic Training Course for 168 members of the new Abyei Joint Integrated Police Unit (JIPU), which comprises officers from the Government of Sudan Police and Southern Sudan Police Services.
- **29 August:** Warrant Officer Mohammad Alimuzzaman of the UNMIS Juba-based Bangladeshi battalion died following a traffic accident the day before when he was providing military escort to a convoy travelling from Wau to Juba. WO Alimuzzaman was the 37th peacekeeper to die while serving with UNMIS.
- **8 September:** Marking International Literacy Day, 50 soldiers from the second Division of the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) at Malakal completed a two-week English language course conducted by the UNMIS Indian contingent.
- **9 September:** The national Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Coordination Council met in Khartoum. Addressing the Council, UNMIS Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ashraf Qazi said that DDR in Sudan was close to entering its implementation phase.
- **9 September:** The newly appointed Chief Administrator of Abyei, Arop Moyak, arrived in Abyei, where he met with UNMIS officials. Mr. Moyak also visited the area JIU and JIPU, stating that he was looking forward to the opening of a new page for Abyei.
- **18 September:** Armed men allegedly belonging to the Ugandan rebel group Lord's Resistance Army attacked the SPLA camp at Sakure village in Western Equatoria State. Following the attack, some 12 people, mainly young boys and girls, were reported missing and presumed abducted.
- **19 September:** UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan Ameerah Haq expressed deep concern at continued fighting between the Government of Sudan and armed rebel movements in North Darfur, which have severely restricted humanitarian access to vulnerable populations.
- **21 September:** International Day of Peace was observed countrywide as a day of non-violence. UNMIS, in collaboration with state authorities and partners, organized celebrations in Juba, Malakal, Wau, Abyei, Kadugli, Ed Damazin and Khartoum.
- **23 September:** The 63rd session of the UN General Assembly opened in New York. This year's president is Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua. All 192 member states were represented. Sudan's delegation was led by Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.



United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

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News Briefs

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Editor-in-Chief: Khaled Mansour

Managing Editor: Catherine Waugh

Design: Sezar Amin

For comments and suggestions contact
unmis-insudan@un.org

Front cover: Displaced mother and child seeking shelter on an abandoned train next to their flooded tukuls in Aweil. UNMIS photo: Tim Mckulka

Back cover: Woman from Kholiat village near Kadugli with harvest of maize. UNMIS photo: Johann Hattingh

NEW PEACEKEEPING CHIEF VISITS SUDAN

Alain Le Roy, the UN's new Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations, visited Sudan from 6 to 13 October, making the country his first official destination since being appointed in August.

"We have 18 operations worldwide, so we have many challenges. However, I started with the Sudan because I think there are many things at stake here," said Mr. Le Roy, who succeeded former head of peacekeeping Jean Marie Guehenno.

In Khartoum, USG Le Roy met with the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Sudan, Ashraf Qazi, and UNMIS senior management. He also held discussions with senior government officials, including Minister of Foreign Affairs Deng Alor, Presidential Adviser Nafie Ali Nafie and Director of National Security Salah Gosh.

During a trip to Juba, Mr. Le Roy met with First Vice-President of Sudan and President of the Government of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir. The USG noted that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) had remained on track, but that much must be done to implement the agreement on schedule. The parties must redouble their efforts to accomplish outstanding benchmarks, he said.

"Much has been achieved, but there is still a need for the UN to continue to play its role," Mr. Le Roy said, stressing that the main challenge was to help keep peace in the entire country. "If the CPA derailed, the whole of Sudan would be in trouble."

En route to Juba, the USG stopped in Abyei to meet with members of the newly formed Joint Integrated Unit and Joint Integrated Police Unit. These units are

responsible for security and policing under the Abyei roadmap agreement, which emerged after violent clashes in the town last May displaced over 50,000 people and left 98 others dead.

Visiting Darfur, Mr. Le Roy met with State Governor Osman Mohamad Yusuf Kibir in El Fasher, who assured him that his government had provided UNAMID (the AU-UN Hybrid



USG for Peacekeeping Alain le Roy and UNMIS SRSG Ashraf Qazi at briefing in Juba. UNMIS photo: Johann Hattingh

"I started with the Sudan because I think there are many things at stake here"



Alain le Roy meeting with Nafie Ali Nafie, Presidential Adviser. UNMIS photo: Johann Hattingh

Operation in Darfur) with all possible facilities to carry out its mission. "Channels of cooperation with UNAMID will remain wide open," the Governor said.

Mr. Le Roy also met in El Fasher with internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abu Shouk, Al Salaam and Zam Zam Camps. The USG said UNAMID had plans to deploy at least 4,500 troops by the end of this year – bringing total deployment to about 65 per cent of mandated levels.

Meeting with UNAMID staff in El Fasher headquarters, Mr. Le Roy presented medals of service to peacekeepers, including posthumous awards to Rwandan soldiers who died on 8 July during an ambush in Shangil Tobaya.

The USG also travelled to Lill, North Darfur, where he met Minni Minawi, leader of the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi, before rounding off his Darfur trip with stops at El Geneina and Nyala. ■



L to R: Chris Johnson, Abyei Head of Office; Ashraf Qazi, UNMIS SRSG; Alain Le Roy, USG; Colonel Valentino Tokmac, JIU Commander; Lt Colonel Ali Abdullah, Deputy JIU Commander. UNMIS photo: Johann Hattingh

RUMBEEK: A GROWING HUB

Formerly an underdeveloped market town mainly trading in ground nuts, beans and goats, Rumbek is emerging as a vital economic and political centre in Southern Sudan.

The town now has two water bottling factories – Nile Spring and Nile – supplying Lakes and other southern states, with five others underway for sodas and related products.

Supporting its growing commerce, Rumbek hosts Nile Commercial and Kenyan Commercial banks. The town also has a new market, a good road network and an airport connecting it with other major locations in the south as well as East Africa.

Commenting on the town's burgeoning prosperity, Deputy Governor and Minister of Local Government and Law Enforcement Awan Guol Riak said, "Unlike the past, today even in the cattle camps people sleep on mattresses, wear clothes, drink soda and mineral water."

The town has been surveyed and a master plan drawn up, Mr. Guol said. "It (Rumbek) has started opening roads, there are good hotels and restaurants that are now operational ... some of them have started building permanent (as opposed to prefabricated) buildings ... for example, the Executive Hotel near Rumbek airport."

Rumbek's policy towards business as well as its hospitality to foreigners has helped attract commerce to the town, said its mayor, Paul Madit Malual. "In order to encourage traders, we allowed them to sell regardless of where they came from."

The town was now trying to set up a system to check legal documents like waybills, delivery notes and invoices from place of origin to final destination, the mayor added. The real cost of goods would then be known and fair charges

applied.

Politically, Rumbek rose in status when it became a centre for high-level

"Unlike the past, today even in the cattle camps people sleep on mattresses, wear clothes, drink soda and mineral water"

Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) meetings during the civil war. Rumbek elders organized a reconciliation ceremony for SPLA leader John Garang and his general, Salva Kiir, paving the way for signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005.

When it was taken over by the SPLA in 1997, Rumbek was chosen as provisional capital of Southern Sudan, said Mr. Malual. Choosing Rumbek dated back to the 1940s when the city became the senior district of Greater Bahr el Ghazal State. Also, Rumbek Secondary School was opened in 1948 to serve Southern Sudan, which then included Greater

Equatoria, Greater Bahr el Ghazal and the Greater Upper Nile states.

After the CPA was signed, the first draft of the Interim Constitution for Southern Sudan was passed by the National Liberation Council (NLC) in Rumbek. It was also the first town to host UNMIS when it began setting up a peacekeeping mission the same year.

Although Southern Sudan opted to move the capital to Juba later in 2005, Rumbek remained

an important administrative town. It is the headquarters of the Southern Sudan Commission for Census Statistics and Evaluation, Deputy Governor Riak noted.

The town still faces several developmental challenges, including a poor road network linking it with other towns during the rainy season as well as a shortage of basic social services. But it is slowly and steadily becoming a key outpost in the south. ■

Emmanuel Kenyi



Rumbek's new market. UNMIS photo: Emmanuel Kenyi

NO ROADS, NO DEVELOPMENT

Located just 85 kilometres north of Juba, Terekeka's bad roads hinder trading, agriculture, fishing and extraction of natural resources

"If you want to sell even goats or chickens, you need to walk more than 80 kilometres to reach Juba," said Reverend Laverick Baying of Terekeka Episcopal Church.

Bringing goods to Terekeka was equally challenging, the Reverend said. "To bring goods from Juba, we have to depend on water transport, which is very slow and expensive ... we are tired of this road problem."

Riddled with potholes, the county's roads are muddy and inaccessible during the rainy season. When vehicles get stuck in the mud, long queues build up behind them waiting for the road to dry, which could take up to a week, according to Terekeka County Acting Commissioner Peter Doctor.

Businesses trading in perishables like tomatoes, cabbages and onions stood to lose thousands of dollars each day of heavy rain, Mr. Doctor said.

The county's poor road network had discouraged many farmers from tilling their fields, although some grew crops for their own consumption, the Commissioner added. "Terekeka has not made food production a priority because even if the crops are produced, there is no access to markets."

He added that transport problems had forced Southern Sudan to depend entirely on its neighbours for goods. "Goods have to flow from the neighbours into Juba before they are dispatched to their final destination (Terekeka). This has caused a climb in the prices of both food and non-food materials."

Southern Sudan also had natural resources, such as land, fish, forest, minerals and oil, said the Acting Commissioner. These resources required good roads to transport them from their origins to selling points.



One of Terekeka's muddy roads. UNMIS photo: James Sokiri

"If you want to sell even goats or chickens, you need to walk more than 80 kilometres to reach Juba"

Simon Simbek, a 41-year old fisherman, stressed that road transport was vital for developing counties like Terekeka. "From 2005 to 2007, I used to carry my catch on my head to Juba for marketing. Now I have bought a motorbike with the money I got from the sales of the fish."

Acting Commissioner Doctor was also concerned that bad roads, combined with a lack of other basic services, would discourage refugees and internally displaced persons from returning to the county. "Returnees are disappointed by road conditions and lack of basic services like schools and health centres. Some say they want to go back to Juba or to neighbouring countries." ■

Felix Leju and James Sokiri

Terekeka buys "historic" vehicles

Terekeka County recently held a ceremony to honour its purchase of a Land Cruiser and three motorcycles – bought thanks to its first revenue collection since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Revenue, resulting from demarcation of land plots and market dues, was only collected in Terekeka town and a few accessible payams (townships). But the town still considered it a memorable occasion.

Describing the vehicle purchase as a "historic event", Acting County Administrator Peter Doctor said it was the first achievement the county had made since independence. "This is (from) the sweat of our labour and in fulfillment of the Wealth Sharing Protocol (of the CPA)."

One of the motorcycles will be given to the county's liaison office in Juba, another to Terekeka payam and the third to the county office.

Bigger revenue from the country will depend on development of roads to access all 11 payams, Mr. Doctor said. Also, bridges on many streams were broken down, blocking traders' access to many townships for business – a big source of revenue.

"If we are to realize big revenue and sustain ourselves as a county, we need a good communication network ...," Mr. Doctor said.

He added that higher revenues would also lean heavily on development of agriculture and fishing. "There are no NGOs in the county which support us in development programmes ... some say they are here for health care, nutrition and what have you, but how can they deliver their services without roads," he said.

A PAYING CROP



Wawalang cooperative members working their field. UNMIS photo: Ojja Bosco

In a region desperately lacking food production, a group of 30 novice farmers on the banks of the Nile near the Southern Sudanese capital of Juba have harvested their first money-making crop.

The 20 men and 10 women of the "Wawalang village farmers cooperative" have produced enough vegetables and cereals to feed themselves ... and sold the rest for 1,000 Sudanese pounds.

Undaunted by pests and unseasonal weather that had destroyed most of the previous harvest, the group forged on with a second planting to produce egg plant, okra, tomatoes, dodos, cabbage, maize grains and sorghum.

"We were really frustrated by the first yield we had because most of the crops were destroyed and some were badly affected by the dry season ... but this time we have improved our output ...," said Cooperative Secretary George Wani Alfred.

During a visit to the farm by representatives of UNMIS and the Central Equatoria State government on 28 August, State Chairman for Food Security Paul Lado encouraged cooperative members to double their efforts to grow food and learn new methodologies.

"Southern Sudan ... has the potential to feed the entire region, given the nature of its soil ... water and good rainy seasons," he said, urging the group to stop relying on short-term food aid from the World Food Programme (WFP) and other organizations.

Mr. Lado also appealed to international organizations to build up local farmers' capacity to break dependency on food

aid. "The farmers need to be assisted so that they can support themselves in a long term."

Cooperative members said lack of insecticides and fertilizers had led to poorer yields than expected, requesting state representatives to supply these items. Assuring the group of government support, Juba County Commissioner Alberpor Redentory Pitia said the cooperative would serve as an example of food production in the state.

The cooperative was launched as an agricultural pilot project on 23 April with the support of UNMIS Commander Col. Salahuddin Miaji, in collaboration with the Bangladesh-based non-governmental organization BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

The FAO provided the farmers with seeds and agricultural tools, while the UNMIS Bangladeshi contingent supplied tractors and a water pump as well as technical and logistical support. The WFP provided some initial food aid for the cooperative, while the farmers supplied the physical labour.

The project aimed to demonstrate the agricultural output potential of the war-ravaged region, and also create a source of income for its members.

According to Apolonia Juan, a 30-year-old widow with five children, Wawalang had been one of the most fertile villages in the area. However, war and lack of know-how had prevented people from cultivating their land. "I attended several agricultural training sessions and I believe this will help change our lives."

Asked what encouraged him to help

kick start the project, Col. Miaji said he was struck by the area's beautiful and fertile landscape as well as its proximity to the Nile. "I felt they (the Southern Sudanese people) should begin creating some income-generating activities through farming, rather than depending on imported food." ■

Ojja Bosco



Chief of Kholiat village in front of his maize crops near Kadugli, Nuba Mountains. UNMIS photo: Johann Hattingh

Returnees feeding themselves

Returnees in Kholiat and Damba villages near Kadugli expect a good harvest this year.

Despite crops that failed earlier due to early planting and late rains, villagers say should have enough to eat.

Additional crops, including maize, sorghum, guavas and lemons, will be ready to harvest in November and December.



A woman from Kholiat village near Kadugli prepares maize harvested from her crops. UNMIS photo: Johann Hattingh

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

Guns are gradually being handed over in several towns of Southern Sudan, as civilian disarmament slowly overcomes pockets of resistance to gain momentum in most states of the region.

In Jonglei State's western town of Akobo alone, some 1,000 rifles have been collected over the past few months, according to State Governor Kuol Mayang.

The Governor expected the number of guns handed in to eventually triple, but stressed the importance of sensitizing people on the importance of disarmament, which had encouraged many in his state to hand their weapons in willingly.

"We need to intensify education of the people if the collection of all firearms in the south is to be a success," said Mr. Mayang.

He admitted that creating awareness among local people could be difficult, especially in isolated areas where radios were lacking. Another obstacle was the nomadic and scattered lifestyle predominant in the state, which made tracking people down for sensitization cumbersome.

Disarmament in Jonglei and other states follows a decree issued by President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Salva Kiir on 22 May, calling for all firearms in civilian hands to be collected within six months. Civilians were to peacefully surrender weapons to state/county authorities and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forces.

The decree has met resistance in some areas, especially among those still suffering from insecurity. In Yei County, Bahr El Jabal, the existence of Lord's Resistance Army rebels (LRA) has hampered the exercise, especially in Tore payam (township), according to the County Commissioner David Lokonga.

"Our guns cannot be collected. Tore is a home for the LRA. If our guns are taken away, how can we defend ourselves?" questioned a senior member of the payam, who declined to identify himself.

Nor has the effort to disarm always been peaceful. An SPLA-led exercise in Rumbek on 8 September spiralled out of control, ending in seven reported cases of gunshot wounds. The SPLA engaged in looting and beating civilians, including UN staff.

Lakes State Governor Daniel Awet Akot expressed regret for the incident to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ashraf Qazi in Rumbek on 12



Guns collected during civilian disarmament in Pibor County, Jonglei State. UNMIS photo: Tim Mckulka

September, stating that a team from SPLA headquarters would carry out a special inquiry and promising that those responsible would be severely punished.

Addressing the Rumbek episode at a Juba press conference on 25 September, Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressley stressed the state's intention to make amends. "The state has promised compensation and has refocused its approach to be civilian led to ensure it is peaceful disarmament."

UNMIS Civil Affairs Officer Agyenta Anthony said that both the UN and GoSS

were working hard to review, discuss and consult with community leaders to ensure peaceful disarmament. He noted that Yei County, despite its reported LRA presence, was a role model in actively using community leaders in awareness campaigns, weapon registration and collection.

UNMIS, Mr. Agyenta said, would provide containers to store collected weapons. ■

James Sokiri

LIVING ON THE



Aweil flood victims sheltering on abandoned railway track.



Surveying her family's temporary home on a derelict railway carriage in Wau, Arhiel Deng Agail said it was the only place they could find on higher ground with access to water.

"When the rains started and the place (Aweil) began to flood, we moved to roadside which was a bit higher and we slept in the open. When the rains continued we moved to the rail tracks."

Arhiel and her family fled heavy flooding in August that displaced thousands of people in Aweil and the surrounding areas of Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap States. Villages were submerged and people forced to flee, some erecting shelters on train tracks or living in railway carriages.

"We took what we could and what we were not able to take got washed away," Arhiel said. "I will stay here as I don't have

the means to move my family to where the others moved to."

The humanitarian community, in close collaboration with the governments of affected states, responded to the crisis with emergency relief for flood victims. UN agencies and non-governmental organizations distributed non-food items, cooking sets and mosquito nets, while the government allocated land for the displaced to settle on.

"Where we are from is very low ground and it is covered in water ... we will not go back there," said flood victim Achan Chan Awiec. "We want to stay here (in Wau), so basic services like boreholes for water should be provided. Water is a major problem here."

Waterborne diseases like cholera have accompanied the flooding. As of mid-October, reports of several thousand

RAILS

"We took what we could and what we were not able to take got washed away"



Flooded tukuls in Aweil area.



Flooded tukuls at sunset.

cases had trickled in from the Aweil area. In response, Medecins sans Frontiere-France established a cholera treatment center in Aweil, which can treat up to 40 patients and expand if necessary, to combat the outbreak.

Southern Sudan suffers from regular seasonal flooding during the rainy season across a broad swathe of the region. Flooding this year was exacerbated by insufficient drainage as well as newly constructed roads and bridges that have interrupted natural drainage patterns.

Many people displaced by the flooding in Aweil area had only recently returned from Khartoum and other parts of Sudan, where they fled during the civil war. ■

Photos and reporting by
Tim McKulka



Aweil displaced people wait for non-food items to be distributed.

“FREEDOM BIKES” COME AT A COST

“Freedom motorbike”: One of the most lethal threats to life in Southern Sudan since the end of the 21-year civil war

Often seen roaring around the streets of Juba, the *Senka* or “freedom motorbike” has been dubbed one of the most lethal threats to life in Southern Sudan since the end of the 21-year civil war.

Dozens of people have perished due to accidents, while countless others have been injured and maimed, mostly due to reckless or careless driving. No clear data exists on deaths, but observers have warned that many more would result unless serious measures are taken to reduce accidents.

The *Senke* came to Juba and other parts of Southern Sudan after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005. Cheaper than a car, quick and reliable on unpaved southern roads and profitable in a *Boda-Boda* business, it was seen as a “peace dividend”.

In *Boda-Boda*, motorcycles or bicycles are used to carry paying passengers short distances within a town lacking taxis and buses. The practice is well-developed in many districts of Uganda, especially in areas of heavy traffic, where people wish to avoid unnecessary delays waiting for buses.

In Southern Sudan, with its underdeveloped transport system, *Boda Boda* has helped overcome difficulties travelling from one point to another. It is also a profitable business requiring little initial capital, which has attracted youth



Boda-Boda drivers waiting for customers at Custom Market in Juba. UNMIS photo: Ojja Bosco

with no other means of support.

For 17-year-old Juma Wani, becoming a *Boda Boda* driver was the only way to survive in Juba. “If you don't work, you will not get money for food ... Those whose parents are there care for their kids, but we are street children ... how do you expect us to survive when we don't do this?”

Using a borrowed motorbike, Emma Justine became a *Boda Boda* driver two years ago at the age of 14. “I lost my parents during the war and now I'm not in school because I can't afford to pay my school fees ... sometimes I make almost 50 pounds a day.”

The *Senkas* may not present undue hazard in Uganda, but they have a lethal reputation in Southern Sudan. Many drivers are inadequately trained, drive under the influence of alcohol, speed in public places like markets, ride without helmets and ignore zebra crossings.

Boda Boda driver James Soka, 25, said accidents are generally caused by inexperienced riders, and he blames the police for failing to control them. “It's the weakness of the traffic police who have failed to enforce the law ...”

From her perch on the back of

a *Senke* driver's bike, passenger Susan Livian agreed that the police should do more. “If he (the driver) rides slowly, I will be safe, but if he is speeding ... that is when the accidents normally occur ... our police should do something to control the rate of accidents.”

Southern artists like Lasu Emma, Simon Charles Jacob, Original Baby Boy and others have begun singing about *Senke* accidents to inform the public about the dangers of reckless driving. They also point out that many young people become so caught up in *Boda Boda* businesses that they forget all about school.

The UN Development Programme and UN Police, in collaboration with the Government of Southern Sudan, have carried out driving safety awareness campaigns.

UN Police Community Policing Programme has linked up with the Southern Sudan traffic police to launch a school visit programme to educate children on road safety around Juba, said UN Police officer Ogwal Maxwel. They have also aired a talk show on Southern Sudan Television about the importance of observing traffic regulations. ■

Emmanuel Kenyi, with inputs from Ojja Bosco



Boda-Boda drivers Emma Justine (right) and Juma Wani (left) on Juba street. UNMIS photo: Ojja Bosco

EXPATRIATES JOIN AIDS FIGHT

A group of four expatriate Sudanese HIV/AIDS specialists have begun a venture that could dramatically improve efforts to fight the disease in Sudan.

On 10 August, the specialists launched a London-based Sudan HIV/AIDS Working Group (SHAWG) -- a voluntary network of healthcare professionals seeking to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country.

It all began when Sudanese expatriate Dr. Bushra Hereika joined the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) project, an initiative launched in Sudan by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in 2006.

Supported by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, TOKTEN aims to bring back to Sudan the expertise of some 3,426 highly qualified Sudanese professionals living abroad.

Dr Hereika, who works as a consultant in genito-urinary medicine in Bournemouth, U.K., voluntarily travelled to Sudan in October 2007 to help the Sudan National AIDS Control Programme (SNAP) improve clinical services for HIV/AIDS.

During this TOKTEN-sponsored trip, Dr. Hereika was granted free access to all medical files in the Ministry of Health and visited clinical centres in Omdurman, Basahir and Cober as well as Al-Ribat Hospital. He was overwhelmed by what he saw and learned during the visit.

"When I realized that there are an estimated 600,000 HIV cases in Sudan, out of which only 20,000 have access to medical services, I was devastated and kept wondering ... where are the 580,000 others? How are they living with HIV? Are they in one way or another spreading it?"

Returning to the United Kingdom, Dr. Hereika shared his concerns with several Sudanese expatriates who were also HIV/AIDS specialists. Eager to join the fight by transferring knowledge to compatriots in Sudan, the expatriates formed SHAWG in April and launched a website.

"We want to arm Sudanese health workers ... with the necessary knowledge to tackle the epidemic in the best possible way. We hope that more Sudanese and



SHAWG members (right to left) Dr. Bushra Hereika, Dr. Zahir Babiker, Dr. Abdel-Kareem Elgoni, South Africa, Dr. Hamad Abdelhadi. UNDP photo.

non-Sudanese will join us in this life-saving fight," said Dr. Hereika.

SHAWG members also include Dr Zahir Babiker, a specialist in infectious

"We want to arm Sudanese health workers ... with the necessary knowledge to tackle the epidemic in the best possible way"

diseases and virology in Manchester, U.K., Dr. Hamad Abdelhadi, a specialist in infectious diseases in Newcastle, U.K., and Dr. Abdel-Kareem Elgoni, consultant for the Health System Trust in Johannesburg.

From 20 July to 11 August this year, the four men trained over 60 Sudanese clinicians from 15 northern states on better screening, diagnosing and treatment of people living with HIV. The training was conducted in partnership with SNAP and the World Health Organization and funded by the UNDP-managed Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The four expatriates are now outlining recommendations to improve HIV care and treatment in Sudan, especially in human resources development, HIV quality control, patient monitoring and follow-up, service promotion and health care settings. SNAP counts on this initiative to strategically address the human resources capacity in Sudan and bridge existing gaps in knowledge and skills.

SNAP Director Mohamed Abdel Hafeez noted that Sudan had made big strides in dealing with and talking about HIV, but that the issue was still sensitive. "For us ... it makes a huge difference to have Sudanese experts as HIV advisers. People trust them because they speak the same language, they know the culture and have no other objective but to help."

Unlike many countries in the region, Sudan has decided to face the epidemic rather than deny it. According to SNAP, 94 free Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centres as well as 35 HIV/AIDS care and treatment centres have been established and equipped across 15 northern states, in addition to seven prevention mother-to-child transmission centres.

Through Global Fund resources, HIV sophisticated equipment is being procured, but setting up HIV services requires expertise that is not often available in the country. The TOKTEN project covers travel and living expenses for any highly qualified professional expatriate who fulfils the selection criteria outlined in the project's web page (<http://www.sd.undp.org/projects/tokten.htm>). ■

*Aicha Elbasri
Communications Manager, UNDP
Sudan*

ENTERING THE JOB MARKET

In an effort to launch people of Southern Sudan into the labour market, some 15 employers and over 200 potential employees gathered together at Juba's first ever job fair on 21 August.

The four-hour event, held at the Vocational Training Centre, gave employers and job seekers an opportunity to meet face-to-face and discuss available employment as well as needed skills.

"This is an opportunity for us as employers to meet with different job seekers to find out who fits what position," said Rabih Haddad, Finance and Administration Director of the telecoms company Network of the World Limited (NOW).

Mr. Haddad said NOW, headquartered in Yei, aimed to connect employers and job seekers by telephone throughout the 10 states of Southern Sudan within the next five years. The company, which has successfully launched a telecoms network in Juba, will also employ qualified job seekers in the region.

Curriculum vita collected from potential employees would be sorted to find qualified candidates, who would be called for interviews, Mr. Haddad said. "When we take these curriculum vita, we reorganize and sort them out and distribute



Juba's first job fair. UNMIS photo: James Sokiri

to different sections ...finance, human resources ... based on the types of jobs applied for."

The company also trains employees lacking needed skills. Noting the lack of competent technical workers in Southern Sudan, Mr. Haddad said they gave courses to customer care personnel, for instance,

"We are here for the Sudanese job seekers, but skills are what we are looking for"

on computers.

Other organizations were only looking for skilled employees. Jessica Bellman, an administrator with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which has offices in Juba and Malakal, said her organization was looking for qualified and competent people. "Those who have the skills will be offered jobs ... We are here for the Sudanese job seekers, but skills are what we are looking for."

The ICRC supports victims of armed conflict, helping people who have lost limbs to walk and connecting people and families separated by war. The organization also offers services to refugees and displaced persons (IDPs), including the provision of blankets and shelter.

Among the job seekers was 41-year-old Yenki Simon, who had failed to find work since he began seeking it in June, despite a Bachelor's degree in education. "Today I hope things are going to change, as we have all the employers here," he said.

He needed employment to support his seven children, two of whom attended ordinary and five primary school, Mr. Yenke said. "If I fail to get a job, my family will suffer." He added that the job fair was a "bright idea", although some organizations tended to employ foreigners at the expense of Sudanese.

In addition to NOW and the ICRC, organizations attending the fair included the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children-Sweden, OXFAM, UNMIS, Tearfund, and World Vision. The event was seen as a collaborative inter-organizational approach to recruitment, based on availability of skills. ■

James Sokiri



Job seekers filling out applications. UNMIS photo: James Sokiri

THE STONE CRUSHERS OF JUBA



Stone crushers on Jebel Kujur, Juba. UNMIS photo: Emmanuel Kenyi

With the cost of living rising and her husband lacking a steady job, Agnes Peter Wani urgently needed work to help support her family.

Now a 30-year-old mother of five, Agnes left school when she finished primary level three. She had little hope of finding a job requiring even basic training.

"I grew up during the war and I didn't have any opportunity to study higher," says Agnes. "So, I tried to apply for jobs like cleaning or cooking in institutions, but I didn't succeed. My husband ... works on a daily basis when he can but sometimes there is nothing for him."

That was when, in her own words, "God gave me the idea of breaking stones." Since then, Agnes has been working a ten-hour day, six days a week, in the hills of Jebel Kujur.

The Jebel Kujur stone crushing business was launched by a group of pioneering women three years ago. Some lacked a steady income, while others had lost their husbands in the war or seen them return home disabled. Like Agnes, they had little opportunity to go to school or find a better paying job.

To feed their hungry children, these women had no choice but to look for work requiring little documentation, formal training, education or qualification. Instead, they had to combine ingenuity and energy with a willingness to work hard.

Following the women's example, the Juba area today boasts similar stone-crushing schemes in Lologo, Suk Hajer,

Gusene camp, Nyokuron and Munuki, along with an all-embracing workforce that includes nursing mothers, men, and boys and girls of school-going age.

Young people joined the stone-crushing force to either raise school fees or earn enough to put food on the family table



Piles of crushed stones on Jebel Kujur, Juba. UNMIS photo: Emmanuel Kenyi

during hard times. Sadly, many never return to the classroom, compounding Southern Sudan's chronic skills shortage, which stems back to civil war generations with few educational opportunities.

The work is neither well nor regularly

paid. Although Agnes can break up to five nyekeses (a 20-litre jerry can cut in half) of stones a day, the market for crushed stone is "unpredictable". As Agnes says, "the stones are not bought promptly". At times it can take up to a month before a buyer is found.

One nyekese-load of gravel is worth 3 SDG, while a heap of gravel (about three to four tons) can fetch between 250 and 300 SDG. For every heap of gravel sold, the City Council or local authority claims 20 SDG in taxes.

As the supply of small stones at readily accessible surface areas becomes depleted, producing five nyekeses a day is becoming more difficult. Women are now forced to climb to the hilltops, where they must dig and tunnel down to excavate stones from beneath the surface.

Some of the men have set fires around large boulders in hopes that they will disintegrate in the heat. The risk is that they will then become dislodged and roll on top of them.

Injury is a major concern for the women as well. Several have expressed concern that the manual and rudimentary methods used to crush the stones increase the risks of their job. They are also worried about the future, as companies are now bringing modern machinery to Jebel Kujur to produce gravel.

Clearly, women like Agnes Peter Wani fear they may be put out of business. ■

Emmanuel Kenyi

NEWS BRIEFS



Government trains UNMIS Security

UNMIS Security participated in a training programme to set up a firefighting unit under the Department of Civil Defence in the Sudanese Ministry of the Interior from 20 August to mid-September. The outbreak of a small fire in the UNMIS Khartoum compound had highlighted the need for such a unit.

Seven UNMIS security guards underwent basic fire safety training, which covered fire chemistry, types of fires and extinguishing substances, alarm and communication systems, use of fire engines and breathing equipment.

One security officer took an advanced firefighting course, which included chemistry of combustion, early warning and fire safety strategies in buildings, rescue tender, working in the presence of smoke and fire (close firefighting equipment) and evacuation of high buildings as well as first aid.

Staff members who graduated from the course are expected to train other UNMIS personnel, including military and police trained in firefighting. The trained firefighters will spread to other regions to set up fire safety units. An UNMIS Aviation Fire Unit is also envisaged.

UNMIS Fire Officer Ameth Niass said the training provided by the Department of Civil Defence was top rate, highlighting cooperation that could be achieved between UNMIS and the government. The Department of Civil Defence has also agreed to assist UNMIS in formulating a Fire Safety Strategy for the UN compound.

Peace actors gather in Eastern Equatoria

Some 50 representatives of state government, UNMIS, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations met for two days in Torit, Eastern Equatoria State, to discuss an action plan for peace and reconciliation and effective relationships among peace actors.

The state had been experiencing community conflicts that had sparked gun-related violence, thwarted development and ultimately hampered implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Opening the workshop, organized by the Southern Sudan Peace Commission of Eastern Equatoria State in collaboration with UNMIS Civil Affairs, Deputy Governor George Echom noted that the root causes of conflicts included competition for resources, cattle-raiding, boundary disputes and political manipulation.

Stressing the state's commitment to resolve hostilities, Mr. Echom said local police and Sudan People's Liberation Army soldiers had been redeployed to fight cattle raiding. A committee had also been formed to sensitize people in all counties on the disarmament process.

Prisons get latrines, cookers, medical services

In a move to improve sanitary conditions for women inmates, UNMIS Rule of Law Unit helped to complete a four-room latrine at Juba prison, handing it over to the prison authority on 11 August.

According to Robert Leggat, Rule of Law Coordinator for Southern Sudan, the latrine was completed with \$1,500 donated by Rule of Law staff and friends, as the work had been stalled due to shortage of funds.

On the same day, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime Prevention donated two kitchen cookers, two sewing machines and two white cloth rolls to the prison. The cookers will help reduce the cost of fuel and the sewing machines will be used for training.

The donation would help bridge the gap between men and women prisoners, said Southern Sudan Prisons Services Lt. Beatrice Safari. "The female inmates have no uniforms ... and the rolls of cloth will help us sew [them]" She added that the newly renovated latrine would assist in promoting hygiene in the prison, which had no proper sewage system.

Meanwhile, women inmates of Roseries prison, Blue Nile State, benefited from a free medical camp providing medicines, organized by UN Police and the UNMIS Pakistani contingent, on 26 August.

UNICEF and MEDAIR eradicating waterborne diseases

UNICEF and the Swiss-based non-governmental organization MEDAIR signed a \$1.6 million project on 23 August to eradicate waterborne diseases in the 10 states of Southern Sudan before 2011. The project will run until May 2009.

UNICEF Sudan Representative Ted Chaiban said only 6 per cent of the population of Southern Sudan had access to good sanitation and 50 per cent to clean water. He pointed to Eastern Equatoria as one of the states with the highest prevalence of guinea worm in Southern Sudan.

MEDAIR's Deputy Country Director, Francis Woods, said they had already begun the project in Aweil, Terekeke, Torit, Parajok and Kapoeta. "We will construct 10 boreholes in Kapoeta and we shall continue to provide safe water, not only in Kapoeta but in the other areas of the country."



NEWS BRIEFS



Medical care provided for flood victims

The UNMIS Pakistani contingent travelled on 14 September with representatives of the World Health Organization and UN High Commissioner for Refugees to the village of Ballela, Blue Nile State, where heavy rains had cut inhabitants off from health care, including 1,200 returnees from Ethiopia.

A total of 587 patients were treated in four outpatient departments and given free medicine. Patients were mainly suffering from malaria, malnutrition, diarrhea, coughing and allergies.

On 20 August, the UNMIS Bangladeshi contingent provided free medical care for the victims of severe flooding that had affected about 176 households in Blue Nile State.

Some 1,063 patients, including 308 women and 549 children, were treated and given free medicine at 11 outpatient departments in the villages of Hai Azibair, Hai Almusalas and Hai Alwohda.

The contingent also set up a minor operating theatre as well as a laboratory and electro-cardiograph, blood group classification, blood sugar and blood malaria parasite test facilities.

UNMIS military donate medicine to prison, hospital

UNMIS Chinese, Kenyan and Pakistani contingents in Warrap state donated medicine to Kuajok's Prison Service in a ceremony on 26 August, following a request made by local authorities.

During the event, attended by state officials and UNMIS representatives, Deputy Director of Warrap Prison Service Samuel Deng Deng said, "I am very happy ... the drugs have been provided to this prison, as we had no medicine before and many prisoners have been suffering from sickness."

Similarly, on 19 August, UNMIS Pakistani Aviation donated for the second time assorted medicine worth \$4,355 to Wau Teaching Hospital. The 47 cartons of medicine included the rare anti-rabies drug.

Dr. Paul Ater, Director General of Wau Teaching Hospital, commended UNMIS for its support, stating, "This small token will go a long way."



Women police trained in CPA, elections, gender

Some 64 Southern Sudan Police Service women officers took part in a workshop on 23 August in Juba on elections, gender issues and the role of UN Police as well as the Southern Sudan Police Service in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

During the workshop, organized by UNMIS with assistance from the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNIFEM Programme Manager Lucie Luguga urged participants to defend their rights, stressing the importance of girls' education.

Many women police officers in Southern Sudan have failed to climb to higher ranks due to high illiteracy rates among them. Female investigators are also rare, which has often put women victims of sexual violence at a disadvantage.

JIUs trained in child protection

In an effort to educate the military about the importance of protecting vulnerable civilians, UNMIS Wau Child Protection Unit organized a "Child Protection Training" course for the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) at the Kenyan Battalion Training Centre from 9 to 11 September.

The course for 30 area officers of the JIU, which combines Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army soldiers, also focused on the need to integrate child protection into their daily operations.

Topics covered included military functions and the civilian population, post-conflict impact on civilians and children, JIUs and protection of humanitarian workers, protection of women's rights during military operations, child development and sexual exploitation as well as abuse of children.

The JIU also drew up a child protection work plan and selected eight Child Protection Focal Persons to help prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse by directly dealing with related issues during military operations.

