

The Killing of Seven UNAMID Peacekeeping Personnel in Darfur: a terrible tragedy, a clear warning
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On **July 13** seven personnel from the UN/AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) were killed and seventeen wounded north of Nyala (South Darfur) in a brutal, sustained armed assault distinguished by heavy machine-gun fire, the use of rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), and the deployment of powerful anti-aircraft weaponry mounted carried or mounted on approximately ten vehicles. The attack was almost certainly carried out by militia proxies of the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party regime in Khartoum. Despite promises, the likelihood that the regime will allow a thorough investigation is virtually non-existent, and prosecution even less likely. Just ten days earlier (**July 3, 2013**) unidentified gunmen ambushed a UNAMID patrol near Labado (South Darfur), 50 kilometers to the east of Nyala. Since **January 1, 2008** there have been countless assaults on the UNAMID and more than 50 of its personnel have been violently killed, with many more seriously wounded. And yet there has not been a single prosecution for any of the attacks on these "blue-hatted" peacekeepers that make up UNAMID. In turn, the failure to push adequately for such prosecution by Khartoum only increases the sense of impunity throughout Darfur, and represents yet another failure of the international community in supporting UNAMID politically.

The Mission has also been badly constrained by a lack of adequate transport and communications equipment, as well as military fire-power: the only helicopter gunships deployed to the region for UNAMID were withdrawn by Ethiopia many months ago. Militarily capable nations have been content to watch Darfur disintegrate rather than provide critical equipment for a UN Security Council-sanctioned peacekeeping mission. Moreover, the political leadership of UNAMID, particularly the Joint Special Representatives, has been a series of disastrous failures, dressed up as personal achievements by the likes of Rodolphe Adada and Ibrahim Gambari. Their failures have done much to create the climate in which UN peacekeepers have become such frequent targets. Their insistence that violence in Darfur has largely ended, that they have brought peace to the region, and that security prevails has done much to prevent the international community from understanding how violent a place Darfur remains. For its part, the international community has been quite prepared to accept inaccurate, even nonsensical accounts of the situation on the ground in Darfur.

An egregious example of the distortions offered in place of difficult but honest accounts is provided by Hervé Ladsous, the head of the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Last **April (2012)** he declared that UNAMID was preparing to reduce its force by over 4,000 troops and police. The justification? [Security had improved sufficiently to justify the drawdown](#), and UNAMID force size should reflect "reality on the ground," Ladsous asserted. In fact, this was really a tacit admission that UNAMID was failing and that DPKO did not wish to fund a failing Mission at such high levels. But the timing of this statement could hardly have been worse. Though violence has ebbed and flowed throughout ten years of conflict in Darfur, Ladsous spoke just as violence was again surging to levels not seen since the earliest years of the genocide. Aerial bombardment of the eastern Jebel Marra region—subject to Khartoum's humanitarian embargo for three years—intensified. Attacks on camps became more frequent and violent, extortion schemes more brutal, the epidemic of rape continued undiminished, those returning to their lands were attacked with growing impunity by Arab militia groups, and humanitarian reach diminished as violence accelerated.

July 2012 was a turning point in the upsurge of violence that was already well underway throughout Darfur: in the displaced persons camps, in rural areas, in the towns, even in the city of Nyala, capital of South Darfur and the largest city in all of Darfur. On **July 31** scores of student demonstrators were gunned down in Nyala down by Khartoum's security forces using automatic rifles. Elsewhere intense fighting between rebel groups and Khartoum's Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) was reported as well, especially in eastern Darfur (see "[Forgotten Darfur: Old Tactics and New Players](#)," **Small Arms Survey, July 2012**). And various paramilitary elements, including the *Abu Tira* (Central Reserve Police), and Border Intelligence Guards—often divided along Arab tribal lines—became engaged in increasingly violent killings and looting. A well-placed, highly informed source on the ground reported in **early August 2012** that:

Kutum town has been overrun by Arab militia since last Thursday [**August 3, 2012**]...all of the INGOs [International Nongovernmental Humanitarian Organizations] and UN offices in the area have been thoroughly looted and their staff relocated to el-Fasher. All of the IDPs from Kassab IDP camp have been displaced. The markets in Kutum and in Kassab have both been thoroughly looted. (e-mail received from Darfur, **August 5, 2012**; also source for following two quotes)

The implications of this violence have not been reported anywhere—by the UN, UNAMID, or even Radio Dabanga. But they are enormous:

Most of the north part of North Darfur (all the way to Chad) is served from Kutum and now all [humanitarian] organizations have lost all capacity because of the looting, and I do not see the humanitarian community reinvesting in the basic infrastructure because of what has happened. This is going to cause huge humanitarian issues in Kutum and the IDP camps there. All the fuel at the INGOs was looted. This fuel is for vehicles but also for the generators to run water pumps in town and outside of town. This could turn bad, as it is the rainy seasons right now.

Radio Dabanga (**August 2, 2012**/Kutum) also reported eyewitness accounts of the destruction of compounds belonging to (among others) the UN World Food Program and (Irish) GOAL, as well as Kutum's market areas:

Eyewitnesses from Kutum, North Darfur, told radio Dabanga that pro-government militias stormed the Al Gusr, Al Dababeen and Al Salam areas and the entrance of a large market. They added that the pro-government militias attacked humanitarian organizations' compounds in Kutum town.

Agence France-Presse reported (**August 10, 2012**) on UN OCHA's finding that...

during the violence, the *premises of five humanitarian organisations were looted*. Humanitarian staff have been evacuated to El Fasher town. The World Food Programme previously announced that its Kutum compound was looted for about 12 hours from around midday on **August 2**. (*all emphases added*)

The violence continued to accelerate throughout **October 2012**. On **October 17** a robust UN investigative patrol was making its way to the Hashaba region of North Darfur, where a widely reported massacre of civilians had recently occurred; the convoy was attacked by an extremely heavily armed and well-positioned force that had anticipated the convoy route. The UN, despite its own firepower, was forced to retreat back to Kutum. One soldier was killed, three were injured (one critically). All evidence points to an Arab militia proxy force as responsible for this attack, carried out with weapons not previously seen in the Darfur conflict, and with the clear goal of preventing a UN investigation. For a detailed account of this evidence, see "[The Avalanche of Violence in Darfur Continues to Accelerate](#)" (**October 12, 2012**) and "[Violence in Hashaba, North Darfur: A brutal portent, another UN disgrace](#)" (**October 30, 2012**). Even UNAMID said at the time that that attack may well have been a deliberate attempt to prevent the mission from assessing the events at Hashaba. Indeed, there were clear precedents for preventing UNAMID from assessing atrocity crimes, most disgracefully in the failure to gain access for an investigation of the large-scale massacre at Tabarat, near Tawila in North Darfur (see "[What We Learn of UNAMID from the September 2010 Tabarat Massacre](#)").

Evidence readily available strongly suggests that at least two other previous attacks on UNAMID were ordered by Khartoum, and this past May I discussed these and other attacks at length ("[Killing UN Peacekeepers: A Ruthless Proclivity of Khartoum's SAF, Militia Proxies](#)"). Such attacks and the relentless restriction of movement by Khartoum's forces have left UNAMID badly demoralized, understanding all too well that their movement is entirely under the control of Khartoum's Military Intelligence, SAF, and proxy "security" forces—many of the latter simply re-cycled *Janjaweed*. The regime constantly denies access to UNAMID as it attempts to conduct investigations of reported atrocities and violations of international law. Despite UNAMID's official celebration of its patrol accomplishments, a recent dispatch from Radio Dabanga quotes a Darfuri camp official offering a starkly different view:

Displaced people in the Darfur camps say that the lack of UNAMID patrols has contributed to the increased number of attacks by militias. Some camps reported that they only see an UNAMID patrol once a month on average, while others "have not seen a patrol for a long time...." UNAMID night patrols around the camps stalled in **2010** during the Doha negotiations "under the pretext of a lack of vehicles."

For his part, Ladsous seems to live in another world in his recent description of UNAMID:

The mission "has the inherent robustness to deal with the situation," Ladsous said at a separate news conference. "It is true, though, that we have experienced some incidents in which the reaction of the troops was not exactly what we would have expected." (Agence France-Presse [Khartoum], **July 5, 2013**)

As evidence of UNAMID's "robust" character, Ladsous points to a recent episode:

A deadly firefight in Sudan's Darfur this week proves that Blue Helmets can "do the job" in the region where security has deteriorated, the UN's top peacekeeper told AFP in an interview. Hervé Ladsous was responding to critics who say the African Union-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) ... is not aggressive enough in fulfilling its mandate to protect civilians. At the same time, he admitted **there have been a few cases** where the peacekeepers' actions did not meet expectations. On Wednesday, though, a Nigerian patrol "performed very well" during an ambush by unknown gunmen in the community of Labado, east of the South Darfur capital Nyala, he said. "Let's face it, they can be aggressive and the incident in Labado yesterday showed it.

Such a conclusion, drawn from a single unrepresentative incident, is preposterous, as Ladsous well knows. The claims here seem especially incongruous in light of the attack that killed seven and wounded 17 members of the Mission just a week later (**July 13, 2013**), and fighting that broke out in the streets of Nyala just two days later (**July 7, 2013**). A much more representative example of the relationship between UNAMID and its primary opponent in Darfur was provided in **January 2011**:

On January 26, 2011 a large group of Sudan Armed Forces troops in vehicles approached the IDP camp near Shangil Tobaya: "The Sudanese army detained four displaced people at the camp," said UNAMID. "**The SAF commander at the scene ... then threatened to burn down the makeshift camp and UNAMID team site, if the peacekeepers continued to interfere.**" (Reuters/Khartoum)

Human Rights Watch at the same time had reported:

Sudanese government and rebel attacks on civilians in Darfur have dramatically increased in recent weeks without signs of abating, Human Rights Watch said today.... "While the international community remains focused on South Sudan, the situation in Darfur has sharply deteriorated," said Daniel Bekele, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. ([January 28, 2011](#))

UNAMID has been powerless to reverse a trend that has continued to the present. To attempt to make a single event—in which UNAMID did in fact use its weapons—somehow representative of performance over the past five and a half years is simply mendacity. Since Ladsous only rarely speaks to news organizations and typically in the form of prepared statements, his lies go unchallenged, but lies they remain. When he finds his voice, perhaps he can explain why—despite the "inherent robustness of the mission"—UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was obliged to report in **April 2013** that **Khartoum had deliberately created a backlog of more than 1,400 visas for UNAMID personnel, mostly urgently needed police**, as well as delays in the clearance of UNAMID cargo.

July 13, 2013: what we know about the context for the attack on UNAMID

Nyala is the most populous city in Darfur and has become the epicenter for displaced persons in South Darfur seeking safety and humanitarian assistance (see [detailed UN map of South Darfur](#)). Some come

to these camps from North Darfur and West Darfur, but the large majority of those in Kalma, Otash, Beilel, al-Salam, Saleah and others—many of whom have been living in camps for almost ten years—are from South Darfur. Kalma is often considered by Khartoum to be the most "politicized" of the IDP camps, and in **August 2008** was the scene of a ghastly slaughter of unarmed IDPs by the regime's security forces—here an account I published [contemporaneously in the *Wall Street Journal*](#) with Mia Farrow:

At 6am on the morning of August 25, Kalma camp, home to 90,000 displaced Darfuris, was surrounded by Sudanese government forces. By 7am, 60 heavily armed military vehicles had entered the camp, shooting and setting straw huts ablaze. Terrified civilians—who had previously fled their burning villages when they were attacked by this same government and its proxy killers the *Janjaweed*—hastily armed themselves with sticks, spears and knives. Of course, these were no match for machine guns and automatic weapons. By 9am, the worst of the brutal assault was over. The vehicles rolled out leaving scores dead and over 100 wounded. Most were women and children.

Recent violence in Nyala has been marked by an increasingly brazen attitude on the part of militia forces that Khartoum now only partly controls (indeed, there has been fighting between the SAF and some militia elements that are now little more than bandits). The killing of IDPs has continued in one form or another, and on **June 28, 2013** *Sudan Tribune* reported ("Gunmen kill 6 people outside Nyala"):

An advocacy group said six people were killed this week in different attacks perpetrated by unidentified armed men near Nyala, South Darfur, and called on the peacekeepers to hold up their mandate. In a statement extended to *Sudan Tribune* on Friday, Sudan Development Organization (UK) reported that unknown gunmen killed six internally displaced persons (IDPs) and wounded five others in three attacks carried out this week on civilians outside Nyala.

This violence against civilians in Nyala culminated on **July 7** with heavy fighting in the city that left many dead, including two workers for World Vision, one of the most important remaining international non-governmental humanitarian organizations (INGOs) working in Darfur. Agence France-Presse reported from Nyala on **July 11**:

The fighting in Nyala started when security forces allegedly killed a notorious local bandit who also belonged to the paramilitary Central Reserve Police.

"We heard shooting so we closed our shops and ran home," one merchant, Yahya Haroun, told an AFP reporter who is the first journalist from a foreign news agency to visit Nyala after the unrest. "Then at 7:00pm I got a call from one of my colleagues who told me that armed men were inside our shops," said the clothes retailer. "I tried to come and have a look but when I saw them and their weapons, I went back home."

The next day, he returned to find that only the walls of his two shops remained standing, and his investment worth about 125,000 pounds was gone. Now he says he does not know how he will support his family, including an ill daughter. Darfuri members of the Central Reserve Police formerly belonged to the Janjaweed, a government-backed militia which shocked the world with atrocities against ethnic minority civilians suspected of supporting rebels in Darfur. Among those killed last week were two Sudanese staff from the World Vision aid group, whose compound was hit by a suspected rocket-propelled grenade. The UN's World Food Programme said that because World Vision was one of its partners in South Darfur state, and because of the security situation, **food aid will be disrupted to about 400,000 people including 39,000 students who received the lunches.**

The same day Radio Dabanga reported from Nyala:

A student has reportedly been shot dead and four others wounded on Saturday after a soldier opened fire on them outside the coordination office for National Service in Nyala, capital of South Darfur. Speaking to Radio Dabanga from Nyala hospital, one of the injured students explained that the shooting was triggered when students became impatient at having to wait in long lines to receive the National Service Seal, necessary for their university applications.

And in another dispatch (**July 8**) Radio Dabanga reported on indiscriminate shelling by the SAF that wounded IDP's in Dreige camp, outside Nyala:

The Sudanese Air Force has on Sunday [**July 7, 2013**] reportedly bombed areas around Umm Gunja in South Darfur. The air raid, a source said, was followed by artillery shelling by machine guns. On Thursday [**July 4**], three women were injured after shells "resulting from clashes in Nyala" hit the Dreige camp for displaced. The wounded were transferred to a hospital in the state capital. Sheikh Mahjoub Adam Tabaldiya of El Salam camp near Nyala said the site's population is "terrorized."

Dreige camp outside Nyala was also the scene of a militia killing spree on **June 22, 2013**:

Four displaced people were killed and nine others were seriously injured when "pro-government militiamen" allegedly opened fire on residents of Dreige camp in Nyala, capital of South Darfur on Saturday evening. As a result, thousands of displaced people staged a sit-in demonstration on Monday in front of the UNAMID headquarters in Nyala. Multiple witnesses have told Radio Dabanga that a group of about 15 militiamen in Land Cruisers opened fire on the displaced people near Derabaya, 15 kilometres east of Nyala as they were returning to camp Dreige after collecting firewood. (Radio Dabanga [Nyala] June 24, 2013)

The attack of July 13

The attack of **July 13**—described by UNAMID as an "extended firefight," with a large force pouring heavy fire on the UNAMID convoy—occurred approximately 15 miles west of [Khor Abeche, South Darfur](#). Khor Abeche, where UNAMID has a base, is approximately 40 miles north of Nyala and has been the scene of some of the very worst atrocities of the Darfur genocide. By the end of the fighting, seven UN peacekeepers were dead and seventeen wounded, the worst attack of its kind endured by UNAMID, but with clear precedents (again, see "[Killing UN Peacekeepers: A Ruthless Proclivity of Khartoum's SAF Militia Proxies](#)").

In the absence of further information about this despicable attack, we may still attempt to answer the essential questions—questions that must be answered in any credible investigation, even if not fully conclusively:

- Who controls the area where UNAMID was attacked?
- Who benefits from such an immensely powerful and destructive attack on UNAMID?
- Which party in the conflict has revealed the greatest willingness to attack UNAMID?

To the first question, there can be little doubt that Khartoum's regular and militia forces control this area. The rebel faction known as Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) was emphatic, and this assessment invites a response from UNAMID, so far not forthcoming:

"We don't have any doubt that the act was done by government militia, because militia are deployed in Khor Abeche area," said Abdullah Moursal, spokesman for the Sudan Liberation Army's Minni Minawi faction. "This area is completely under government control." (Agence France-Presse [Nyala], July 14, 2013)

The journalist for Agence France-Presse, first on the scene in Nyala, provides a number of important observations and comments by people in the region, most notably this comment from a humanitarian worker who put himself at very considerable risk by offering this opinion:

A humanitarian source expressed doubt that rebels would have carried out the attack on UNAMID. "When people are killed, probably it's more militia," he said, asking for anonymity.... Local sources [suggested] that the attack appeared to have been planned and carried out by government-linked forces.

To be sure, AFP also reports that:

A UN panel of experts earlier this year reported that former pro-government militiamen had sometimes expressed their discontent with the current government through "direct attacks" on UNAMID staff and premises.

But this ignores the inadequately professional, highly compromised political [character of the current panel of experts](#), as well as the fact that none of the rebel groups has been implicated in major assaults on UNAMID, with the exception of an attack in **September 2007** on an AMIS outpost near Haskanita, North Darfur (an attack that had a [significant context](#)). By way of contrast, the evidence is overwhelming that Khartoum and its proxies have attacked UNAMID on multiple occasions. And even on the occasion of the rebel attack on the AMIS outpost at Haskanita, it was Khartoum's subsequent—and complete—destruction of this town of 7,000—with many casualties—that was by far the greater crime.

More telling is the AFP report that "UN experts, human rights activists and tribal leaders have accused government security forces of involvement in this year's tribal fighting." Using "security forces" not formally part of the SAF is Khartoum's way of doing what it wishes without having to take responsibility for whatever is uncovered about the attacks.

But why would either the rebels or Khartoum's regular or (much more likely) militia allies attack UNAMID? *Cui bono?* Who benefits from such an attack? Although there is a visceral anger and dismay at UNAMID's many failings felt by the vast majority of Darfuris who live amidst perilous security, there is also a constant refrain in the accounts provided by Radio Dabanga: people, especially the traditional leaders—sheikhs, omdas, farshas—all plead continually for UNAMID to increase its patrols, to take a more active role in protecting them, in keeping the marauding militias at bay, and particularly in reining in the feared *Abu Tira*, or Central Reserve Police—mainly former *Janjaweed*. However angry and disgusted Darfuris in the camps and rural areas may be, it makes no sense for them—or for the rebel groups—to attack the only force on the ground, even if it provides only a minimal security presence.

By contrast, Khartoum has clearly had motives to attack UNAMID in the past and on this occasion, most conspicuously in the overwhelming assault on the UNAMID team heading to Hashaba (North Darfur) in **October 2012**. The purpose of the UNAMID mission was to investigate atrocity crimes that had been committed by the SAF and its militia allies; the attack was meant to forestall precisely such investigation. Even attacks in the first year of UNAMID's mandate followed a cruel logic (see "[Attack on UNAMID Forces in Darfur: The Khartoum Regime is Responsible](#)," **July 12, 2008**). What we know most essentially is not only the hostility of Khartoum toward UNAMID—its harassment, humiliation, and threatening actions—but its deep desire to be rid of what it regards as an intrusive force that prevents implementation of its "[New Strategy for Darfur](#)," essentially a plan to compel the return of displaced persons. The regime has repeatedly declared, indeed insisted, that INGOs and UN agencies move from humanitarian relief to "development."

No matter that more than 2 million people are displaced in camps in Darfur and Chad. And here it must be said that OCHA's continuing use of the figure "1.4 million" people in IDP camps deeply misrepresents the situation by excluding the more than 300,000 refugees in Chad, and the 300,000 in the camps who are not provided food by the World Food Program (this latter fact is only occasionally acknowledged by OCHA in its publications); moreover, the figure for displacement hasn't been updated since OCHA chief Valerie Amos [announced on May 23, 2013](#) that **300,000 people had been newly displaced this year alone by mid-May**).

Khartoum has long wanted to remove the *raison d'être* for an international presence in Darfur, and the "New Strategy" is the basis on which it is proceeding, using violence—however chaotic—to ensure that insecurity for humanitarians becomes increasingly intolerable and compels them to leave. An attack on UNAMID as ferocious as that north of Nyala will move humanitarian organizations closer than ever to withdrawing, and a further attenuated UNAMID may follow, given how ineffective the mission has been in protecting displaced persons as well as relief organizations and personnel.

What should we expect?

In the wake of these repeated deadly attacks on UN peacekeepers, what should we expect in the way of a UN response? Judging by past instances, we have already seen the full extent of that response, as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has yet again expressed "outrage" and condemned the attack in a [statement to the UN News Service](#). "The Secretary General condemns this heinous attack on UNAMID, the third in three weeks," the statement said. Mr. Ban "expects that the government of Sudan will take swift action to bring the perpetrators to justice." He expects no such thing. For what about the "swift justice" that demanded by Ban for others on the long roster of UNAMID soldiers killed in the line of duty, [beginning early in the first year of its deployment](#) (2008)—more than five years ago? This is fulsome rhetorical posturing on Ban's part and does a grave injustice to reality of the sacrifice made by these men and women.

We should expect nothing—no arrests, no prosecutions, no justice. There is nothing to justify such expectation. We should long ago have learned to expect no more than a wearily familiar "outrage" from the Secretary-General, or the current head of UN peacekeeping. Their lack of integrity and moral courage do as much as anything to sustain Darfur's agony.

APPENDIX: And if the humanitarian organizations withdraw? Health, nutrition, and mortality indicators

The rainy season is well underway in Darfur; funding for humanitarian efforts has become more difficult in the face of an apparently intractable conflict; the quality of humanitarian work, including assessment, has been badly compromised; [militia forces have become a law unto themselves](#); UNAMID is badly demoralized and failing in its fundamental protection mandate—indeed, cannot protect itself. Beyond this, the broader Sudanese economy is failing, victim of gross mismanagement by the NIF/NCP for its entire 24 years of tyrannical control of national power and resources. This is the context in which to read these very recent dispatches characterizing conditions in Nyala and in the surrounding camps, some of the largest in all of Darfur. Amidst these appalling circumstances, it again become appropriate to ask *qui bono*? Who benefits from the steady weakening of the displaced, largely non-Arab civilian population throughout Darfur? Without question, the Khartoum regime.

• Conditions bleak for newly displaced in Kalma camp, South Darfur (Radio Dabanga [Kalma Camp], July 12, 2013)

The rainy season is increasing the suffering of about 60,000 newly displaced people in Kalma camp near Nyala in South Darfur. One of the leaders of the newly displaced at the camp Osman Abdulrahman Abu Al Gasim told Radio Dabanga that the displaced are distributed across three centres. "Centre One accommodates 3,600, Centre Eight accommodates about 40,000, with 17,000 settled at Centre Five," he said. "The heavy rains have deepened the difficulty of their humanitarian condition, so there are severe shortages of food, shelter and a deterioration of health services," he said. "There has been widespread criticism of the humanitarian organizations operating here," he said, describing their work as "superficial." "They provide no service or aid other than just registering names on papers," Al Gasim lamented, appealing to international humanitarian organisations to provide "real humanitarian aid; both the old and the new displaced are dependent on it."

• Acute diarrhoea outbreak among South Darfur displaced (Radio Dabanga [Nyala Camps] July 5, 2013)

Reports from Kalma camp for displaced persons near Nyala, capital of South Darfur, say that cases of acute diarrhoea are on the increase among residents of the camp. Dr Abdulkarim Abdullah, a physician at one of the camp's clinics, says that at least 250 people visit the clinics each day complaining of acute diarrhoea. "Another cause for concern is vomiting and malnutrition among the children; all a result of the deteriorating sanitary environment and a lack of medicines," he lamented. "This is aggravated by the influx of displaced persons and the rainfall at the camp. Antibiotics just can't treat them anymore." Dr Abdullah criticised the international organisations and the Ministry of Health for not providing medicines. "The health situation is far worse than it was, for example, in 2003 when the organisations operating in the area managed to supply medicines. However, the current organisations are poorer and incapable of providing drugs."

The sheikhs of camp El Salam, also in Nyala, have warned of "the spread of a health disaster at the camp" if the authorities do not intervene. Sheikh Mahjoub Adam Tabaldiya explained to Radio Dabanga that "the rainfall has created large puddles of standing water which result in the breeding of flies, mosquitoes and other insects." He warned that if the authorities do not spray, [this] will lead to the spread of diseases. "Many displaced people are now suffering from diarrhoea and malaria," he said, appealing to the health authorities to intervene by spraying the water pools and providing treatment for the patients.

• **Children, pregnant women die of disease at Kalma camp, South Darfur** (Radio Dabanga [Kalma Camp], June 30, 2013)

Three children and three pregnant women died on Saturday at Kalma camp for the displaced near Nyala, capital of South Darfur. Kalma camp's Sheikh Ali Abdulrahman Al Taher told Radio Dabanga that Samira Isaac, Najat Ali, Amira Suleiman, all pregnant women, succumbed to disease at the camp on Saturday, while three children died of diarrhoea and vomiting. "These women died due to the lack of first aid and primary health care," he lamented. The sheikh pointed out that about 100 toilets have been closed, which means that the displaced must relieve themselves in the open. "This stimulates the breeding of flies and mosquitoes, which quickly spread diseases," he said, expressing grave concern at the deteriorating health situation in the camp due to outbreaks of diarrhoea and haemorrhagic fever "that have a high incidence among children, and lead to an alarming mortality rate." Sheikh Al Taher appealed to health authorities and international relief organisations to speed up intervention. "There are still nearly 60,000 newly displaced who lack food, drink, clothing, blankets and medicines," he said.

• **Rain brings new health fears for displaced in Darfur camps** (Radio Dabanga [Nyala], June 26, 2013)

The arrival of the rainy season has advanced the spread of diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, urinary retention and conjunctivitis in Kalma camp near to Nyala, capital of South Darfur. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) Organisation has warned that a shortage of medicine is exacerbating the situation. Dr Saleh Ahmed Ali who works for the IRC [*sic*—should be ICRC] in Kalma camp told Radio Dabanga that the spread of these diseases is a result of the deteriorating environmental situation. Especially children are vulnerable, with about 200 visiting the hospital each day. "Cases of diarrhoea, flu, and intestinal pain are the most prevalent," Dr Saleh said. "In the past we had reasonable quantities of medicine for the camp, but with the increasing number of new arrivals, we have now completely run out. We can only hope to be re-supplied sometime next week."

The Minister of Health for the Darfur Regional Authority, Osman Al Bushra, told Radio Dabanga that the epidemic is spreading due to large numbers of dead livestock at the drinking water resources, especially in Al Sareif Beni Hussein and Jebel 'Amer in North Darfur. Last October workers at the Jebel 'Amer gold mine were exposed to diseases such as measles, diarrhea, fever, abdominal pains and typhoid. A medical source explained that lack of latrines and scarcity of drinking water may have been the cause, in addition to overcrowding....

• **Livestock, mobile phones stolen in "series of militia attacks" in Darfur** (Radio Dabanga [Attash, also Otash—outside Nyala] Camp, June 30, 2013)

The newly displaced people of Attash camp near Nyala in South Darfur have been subject to a "series of attacks by pro-government militias between Thursday [June 27, 2013] and Saturday this week." A sheikh of the camp told Radio Dabanga that the attacks have been carried out at night by militiamen dressed in the uniforms of the Sudanese Central Reserve Forces (known as Abu Tira). Abdul Naim Adam Mohamed was seriously injured when he was shot in the chest in one attack in which the militiamen allegedly stole 26 mobile phones, and 17 sheep and eight donkeys. Mohamed was transferred to Nyala hospital for treatment. The sheikh said that on Thursday evening, the same militiamen stole 11 mobile phones and five donkeys.

The police at the camp sent the displaced to report the incidents to the Nyala North police station, noting that "the security situation at the camp is deteriorating, especially with regard to the new arrivals." Three displaced women from Kassab camp in Kutum locality in North Darfur were allegedly severely beaten and subjected to attempted rape on Saturday by pro-government militiamen. A sheikh of Kassab camp

informed Radio Dabanga that the women were attacked on their way to tend their farms nearby. "Two donkeys were stolen, and two of the women were severely whipped. The militiamen attempted to rape a third woman, but she managed to escape," the sheikh said. He lamented the ongoing risk of assault, rape and death that displaced people must run in order to practice agriculture. "Just on Saturday, militiamen again raided the camp after first firing into the air to intimidate the displaced," the Sheikh said. He appealed to the international community to pressurise UNAMID to provide the displaced with protection.

[The destructiveness of the sweeping militia attack on Nyala has been only partially rendered; but as World Vision decides whether security permits a resumption of their activities, the destruction of their facilities in Nyala will be a major consideration:

• **South Darfur displaced dread World Vision pull-out** (Radio Dabanga [Nyala Camps], July 11, 2013)

The displaced persons of Dreige camp near Nyala in South Darfur have appealed to the World Vision organisation to supply them with a ration of corn as soon as possible, especially as the holy month of Ramadan has already started. A youth representative at the camp explained to Radio Dabanga on Thursday that the organisation has already brought the corn to the camp to distribute among the displaced, however after its headquarters compound in Nyala was attacked by militias, the organisation has indefinitely suspended its activities.

"An official from World Vision told us that the militia attack destroyed the organisation's files on displaced persons, and all of the computers were stolen. Now, when they want to distribute food to the displaced, they don't know where to start," the youth leader said. "The residents of the camp are also concerned that large stocks of corn present in the camp might be a tempting target for the militiamen who constantly harass them."

The displaced residents of El Salam camp also expressed concern that the World Vision organisation might suspend its activity after the killing of its two employees. Sheikh Mahjoub Adam Tabaldiya explained to Radio Dabanga on Wednesday that reports that World Vision has suspended its activities are catastrophic for the displaced. "If that happens, it means that we will suffer more and more, because we do not own anything," said the sheikh. "As the month of Ramadan has started, we appeal to World Vision to change its mind and engage in activities to save the displaced lives," Tabaldiya concluded.

[Accelerating inflation is rampant throughout Sudan, and there is nothing to slow its rapid rise; here the consequences are for purchases of fuel in Nyala. But soon it will be comparable inflation for food, requiring a greater devotion of family income to purchasing adequate nutrition. And then food will be simply unaffordable, and without the World Food Program and its enabling INGO partners, people will starve:

• **Fuel prices, transport fares double in Nyala, South Darfur** (Radio Dabanga [Nyala], June 27, 2013)

Public transport fares in Nyala, capital of South Darfur, have increased by 100 per cent due to rising fuel prices. The increase is blamed on new government regulations designed to control the sale of fuel. "The price for a gallon of petrol has risen to SDG 55 (\$12.50) on the black market after the government took control of the fuel from all filling stations," a Nyala bus owner told Radio Dabanga. "The same fuel used to cost SDG 28 (\$6.37) a gallon at a filling station."

He says that although the union promised to study the matter on Tuesday, the owners of vehicles decided on Wednesday to increase transportation tariffs by 100 per cent, from one Pound to two Pounds," he says. "The move by the government has effectively transferred a substantial proportion of the available fuel in Nyala to the black market," he said. Nyala often faces power cuts and shortage of petrol, which affects various sectors in the local economy.

• **Short rations, rising Ramadan prices plague Darfur displaced** (Radio Dabanga [Darfur Camps], July 12, 2013)

Displaced people in camps across Darfur are struggling to augment the shortened food aid rations due to escalating market prices during Ramadan. Speaking to Radio Dabanga, a sheikh of Kassab camp in North Darfur complained of the sudden rise of food and commodity prices at the camp. He lamented that a pound of dates has risen to SDG15 (\$3.40), a pound of *ballia* soup costs SDG16 (\$3.63), and a kilo of dried beef SDG30 (\$6.80), and a heap of tomatoes as much as SDG5 (\$1.15).

"The displaced of the camp do not have the cash to afford their daily needs," he explained. "The World Food Programme has already distributed the complete corn ration for the displaced, however this was reduced from 15 kilogrammes to 12 kilogrammes after a lapse of about three months." He highlighted that most of that ration will have been consumed in the run-up to the holy month of Ramadan. "This has caused the price of a plate of millet to climb to SDG5 (\$1.15) and maize to SDG3 (\$0.70)."

The displaced of Fatta Borno camp in North Darfur have similar complaints, and especially lament the soaring price of vegetables. The Sheikh of the camp told Radio Dabanga that the price of a pound of sugar has risen to SDG3 (\$0.70), a pound of dry okra to SDG12 (\$2.75) and the same quantity of dried tomatoes to SDG5 (\$1.15).

At Garsila camp in Wadi Salih locality in Central Darfur, Radio Dabanga has learned that corn and millet now cost SDG14 (\$3.20) a pound.

"These high prices, plus the non-delivery of humanitarian aid, means that the displaced are facing a very dire humanitarian situation," a sheikh said.

And we know that the the rains will continue for more than two more months, threatening the inadequate sheltering of the camps:

• **Houses in South Darfur camps destroyed by heavy rain** (Radio Dabanga [Darfur Camps], July 90, 2013)

Heavy rainfall on Sunday destroyed 150 houses at Square Five of Kalma camp for the displaced in South Darfur. A sheikh of the camp, Ali Abdulrahman Al Taher, told Radio Dabanga that the rainfall has left the displaced in "tragic situations in the open without tents or plastic sheets." Sheikh Al Taher criticised what he called "the silence of international organisations and their failure to provide for the basic needs of the displaced to face the autumn."

In a separate event, the Tawila camps in North Darfur have demanded that international organisations and the government provide them with relief, farming seeds, plastic sheets and tents to enable them to face the rainy season. One of the sheikhs explained to Radio Dabanga that the displaced persons of the Tawila camps total 68,000. "They need aid, tents, plastic sheets and seeds for agriculture. Because of the torrential rains, most of the displaced are living in the open," the sheikh said, claiming that the organisations have not provided the displaced with any aid for two years.

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