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In December 2020, UNV partnered with UNAMID's State Liaison Function, UNFPA and the North Darfur State Ministry of Health and Social Development to celebrate International Volunteer Day. In an effort to fight COVID-19 and promote hygienic practices in the prison environment, 32 female inmates at Shallah Female Prison Center in El Fasher, North Darfur participated in a one-week capacity building workshop on soap making.

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## Laying the ground for sustainable peace in Sudan

UN Volunteers in peacekeeping missions in Sudan have for over a decade supported the country in navigating the difficult path from conflict to peace. Contributions made by young peacekeepers such as the UN Volunteers featured in this story help Sudan build resilience. They support peace missions in delivering their mandates and laying the groundwork to sustain long-term peace.

Since the establishment of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2007, 696 UN Volunteers have served with the mission. These have included specialists in human rights, civil affairs, protection and electoral support, alongside technical and administrative experts as well. This year, UNAMID is closing down and is being replaced with a new mission, the United Nations Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)

In El Fasher (North Darfur), Waheeba Ahmed (34) is serving as a radiographer with UNAMID. As a national UN Volunteer, Waheeba is

dedicating her energy to supporting the achievement of development targets. Through coordination with the mission's medical team, she performs and documents x-rays, mammographs and ultrasounds for all UNAMID personnel, including military, civilian and police.

Through the work she is doing, Waheeba is supporting UNAMID in implementing its mandate. Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of UN Peacekeepers enables them, in turn, to perform their roles in protecting civilians, reducing violence, preventing conflict and empowering national authorities in Darfur.

Like any other, Waheeba's task is not without challenges, especially in the time of COVID-19. With the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, positive cases started to show up in the mission's medical facilities. Waheeba had to be ready to support more than 5,000 UNAMID peacekeeping personnel in El Fasher, while facing the risk of getting infected with the virus herself as she was on the frontline.

"It was a particularly stressful period, as circumstances were changing rapidly and one couldn't predict how things were going to develop," she explains. This, at times, left her and others feeling powerless, as there were certain elements of the situation that were beyond their control.

“ My message to young volunteers is to remember that serving as a volunteer is an honour, because you are the ones who will advance peace and sustainable development in your own countries and around the world. You will help people lead healthier and safer lives and empower communities to better address present and future challenges. --Waheeba Ahmed, UN Volunteer with UNAMID

As UNAMID's mandate comes to a close, UN Volunteers like Waheeba are supporting the mission's smooth drawdown and closure. Meanwhile, others are joining the newly formed United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS).

Mahmoud Sharmouk (28) recently joined UNITAMS as a national UN Volunteer Public Information Officer. He helps keep the Mission's website and social media platforms populated with up-to-date engaging content, including stories, photographs, videos and articles. Mahmoud is also involved in designing visuals for flyers, publications, and newsletters, as well as producing short videos and short interviews that depict the various projects the Mission is implementing. Different content types help reaching out to multiple audiences, so everyone can learn about the new mission and receive updates on the work it is doing.

In an effort to promote peace in Sudan, Mahmoud is currently supporting UNITAMS with a social media awareness campaign that combats hate speech by addressing topics related to ethnic issues and tribalism. "If hate speech goes unchecked, it can escalate into violence at an alarming speed and scale," he explains.

Given that Mahmoud only recently joined UNITAMS, which is also relatively new, he mentions that he has not yet come across any major challenges. As a UN Volunteer, he appreciates the genuine support that he receives from his team, as he feels everyone around is supporting him to develop himself and to benefit from the experience of volunteering.

“ Volunteering with the United Nations is possibly one of the best decisions any young person can take. --  
Mahmoud Sharmouk, UN Volunteer with UNITAMS



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