

North Darfur Governor Assesses Progress

The Governor (Wali) of North Darfur, Osman Yousif Kibir, was interviewed by Lawrence Freeman on Jan. 28 in El-Fasher, Darfur, Sudan.

EIR: We were able to tour all three major IDP [International Displaced Persons] camps between yesterday and today. In your evaluation, how has the situation improved over the last two years, in terms of conditions of life for the people in these camps?

Kibir: Thank you very much. You have asked me a good question. Every human being who visits the state, will comprehend the difference and the change. In terms of the humanitarian situation, a big positive change has occurred. Normal life is approaching—a normal situation is coming into being. Observers looking at this can witness this positive change. Confrontations between the SAF [Sudanese Armed Forces] and the rebel movements have been reduced by 69%.

EIR: What is the cause of this reduction in confrontation and violence?

Kibir: A lot of factors have caused this reduction. Number one, efforts made by the government in terms of insuring security; efforts made for peace talks; efforts and contributions of UNAMID [United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur]; weakness of the [rebel] movement itself. The rebels have been very weak, and they have divided themselves into many small factions. This weakness among them has also contributed positively to making the situation better, and increasing the change. There is also big pressure from society, the community themselves; the people of Darfur are completely rejecting any interest in war, and refusing any encouragement to continuing the war.

Other indicators and factors, are that people are starting to return to their areas of origin. The normal impulse for trading, for economic life, is returning; that also indicates that the situation is changing in a positive

direction. Then there's the expansion of schools and education in different areas.

Peace Talks

EIR: In the current negotiations between rebel movements and the government of Sudan, a lot of this has been taking place at Doha. What is the current status? My understanding is that the JEM [Justice and Equality Movement] is not involved in that discussion; Minni Minnawi's group is not involved. Which groups are involved in discussion with the government, and do you think this will be resolved, and how will it be resolved in the future, to bring complete peace to Darfur?

Kibir: Number one, the peace process should not be tied up by a certain movement which is not contributing to the negotiations; it should take place because the measure of it will be conducted by the community of Darfurians. We are not going to reject their role, but [the peace talks] should not be tied up by them, if they are not there. The peace should go forward. The peace should be carried out by the people of Darfur.

EIR: Which rebel groups are now in negotiation with the government of Sudan for peace in Darfur, and will this continue in Doha?

Kibir: Now the movement which is engaged is the LJM [a split-off of the Sudanese Liberation Army, SLA], led by [Tigani] El Sissi, plus the SLA. Also there is interest from the JEM, Khalil [Inrahim], and Abdel Wahid. Pressure from the international community and the internal community—external and internal pressure—is pushing the JEM and the SLA of Abdel Wahid to join.

EIR: Is the United States officially playing a positive, useful role in resolving the conflicts in Darfur?

Kibir: All this effort is through UNAMID. UNAMID is making a good effort, a good contribution, in the situation right now, but it will be good at this level of contribution, only if UNAMID receives assistance



EIRNS/Hussein Askary

Gov. Osman Yousif Kibir, April 2009.

and support from the committed nations. Let me emphasize this point, and here I am going to accuse some international parties. I am not going to use their names, but I accuse them because they are trying to put UNAMID in a very weak position, because they are interested in other mechanisms.¹ In this regard, we, as officials of the government of Sudan, are still committed to support UNAMID, and help them to continue working with us for peace.

I am talking to you as a local representative of Northern Darfur and because I am part of the Darfur community. UNAMID is a suitable mechanism to continue helping the peace of Darfur. Before I was Wali, I was one of the Darfur people. I was born here in Darfur.

EIR: You are a Darfurian.

Kibir: Yes. I am from an African tribe—my tribe is the Barti.

1. In further discussion, Kibir identified U.S. UN Representative Susan Rice as personally responsible for the new strategy of criticizing and weakening UNAMID.