

## **UNAMID Ordnance Disposal Office Supports the Government of Sudan and UNAMID Stabilization Efforts in Kereinik Locality, West Darfur.**

It was the first week of summer classes in Ribat secondary school, El-Fasher, North Darfur. Annas Adam Ahmed, 11 years old was out playing with his friends when he spotted a shiny object. Gleefully, he picked up the object and invited his friends to join in discovering their new found “toy”. Unknown to them, the shiny object was an unexploded ordnance (a hand grenade), a sad legacy of the over 13 years of armed conflict in Darfur. He fiddled with the hand grenade and it exploded resulting in the death of Annas Adam and severely injuring his three other friends all aged between 11 and 13 years. Unfortunately, Adam is one of many children that have lost their lives to unexploded ordnance related accidents in Darfur. Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) incidents are regular occurrences in Darfur and children are the most affected.

For over 10 years, in cooperation with the National Mine Action Centre, the UNAMID Ordnance



Disposal Office (ODO) has been clearing lands and routes contaminated by ERW, sometimes re-clearing areas that have been previously cleared but re-contaminated due to the ongoing conflict. These ERW clearance efforts advance protection, peace and development. They support the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons and gives encouragement that their livelihoods and ways of living will be restored.

In early 2017, with stability returning to many conflict areas ODO decided for the first to approach ERW disposal through a systematic survey and clearance of ERW at the locality (district) level with the aim of supporting the stabilization efforts of the Mission. The pilot project was initiated in Foro Baranga, West Darfur and in April, 2017 the locality was declared free of known ERW. This was the first administrative area in the Darfur states to achieve this status.

On 28 February, 2018 Kereinik locality, also in West Darfur State was declared free from all known ERW contamination. The ceremony was attended by representatives of the embassies

of the United States of America, Japan and Italy, the State Minister for Defense, the Governor, and the UNAMID Sector West Head of Office, Omar Kane. He told the community, “Kereinik is an example of transition from war and instability to peace and stability”. He emphasized that the clearance of all known ERW contaminated areas in Kereinik will ensure safe movement of the population and will enable the safe commencement of stabilization projects in the locality.

On his part, the Wali of West Darfur State Mr. Fadl Elmula Elhaja commended ODO for clearing all known dangerous areas in Kereinik and reiterated that “this means our people can conduct farming activities on their lands once again in safety”. Kereinik locality had been an epicenter of inter-tribal conflict in West Darfur. The Programme Manager of the Ordnance Disposal Office, Jeffrey McMurdo reminded the community that sustainable security requires a collective effort. “Today is a great day for the protection of civilians. The best way to prevent



death of children from ERW accidents is to work with the local communities to clean up ERW contaminated areas and that is what has happened here in Kereinik”.

Since 2006, Ordnance Disposal Office has conducted general explosive hazard assessment in **2,561** villages across Darfur measuring **3,871** Km<sup>2</sup>, assessed a total of **24,980** km of routes. In conducting these activities, a total of **41,283** items of explosive remnants of war have been located and destroyed, another **2,340,854** small arms and ammunition were safely destroyed and a total of **1,193,154** beneficiaries have received Explosive Remnant of War risk education through direct presentations.

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