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Al-Tigana Organization for Women's Development



Al-Fashir, North Darfur

Altigana established an office in Fashir to support internally displaced women. The team organized fundraising to help support poor families by supplying them with a small amount of cash each month. However part of the money was allocated to pay compensation in order to prevent violent conflicts between tribes. In many cases, if the expected compensation is not paid, a minor incident can escalate to violence and killings.

For mediation, Altigana relies on the old customary system called Rakouba (a veranda built from local material), which is also the name of the process used to negotiate a reconciliation and pay compensation (Diya) to victims. In that system, the fighting parties meet on the “rakouba” to determine whether the distress was caused by an intentional or non-intentional action, and if Diya is due. Then they will decide on compensation and the problem will be solved. In most cases people comply with the judgement and the decisions proposed by the mediators, the Rawakeeb.

Ibtisam used a model of reconciliation for her own tribe, the Tunjour (one of the bigger tribes of North Darfur), to enable them to live in peace with other tribes. She started by reminding the Tunjour of its lost identity: Tunjour was once a well-organized kingdom of communities spread around Darfur and Chad. A group of educated Tunjour men and women brought their people together from Fashir, Kafoot and Saraf Omra localities. With the participants they discussed the fact that the Tunjour do not want to continue living in a state of armed conflict. They urged each family to take their sons back from the armed movements and it was decided that those who still insisted on joining armed groups, would no longer be considered part of the Tunjour community. Thereafter they divided Fashir into six areas and organized the youth to carry out a demographic survey. They listed the number of Tunjour families, discovered how many Tunjour women had married into other tribes and found out how many were displaced and from which villages. Meanwhile, the Tunjour women from civil society organizations raised awareness by meeting with their elders, the governors, the ministers and officers from the tribe, approaching them as normal citizens, as caring parents. At the end of the campaign they requested all the Tunjour families to sign a register showing whether or not their sons were ready to give up violence and join the move for a new peaceful identity.

Based on that experience, Altigana also organized a mediation effort between the Berti and the Zayadia tribes in North Darfur in April 2015. They had been engaged in armed conflict, wounding many and causing deaths. Together with other women's organisations, they called meetings with women in the towns of Milliet and in Kuma to mourn for the deceased, to talk about the losses caused by the armed clashes and to analyse the root causes of the violence. The women approached the customary authorities and eventually a peace treaty was signed, to be monitored by women. The process was recognized by the peace forces (UNAMID) as an important example of “best practice”.