



Angela Anyeman left Ghana in early 2010 to join the United Nations- African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) as a UN Police officer. Based in El Fasher, North Darfur, she is the gender and child protection focal point for the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs), which is home to over 50,000 internally displaced people.. UNAMID carries out three patrols daily in Zam Zam, with a rotation that allows UNAMID to patrol 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Each day, Angela works a different shift. Today she is on the morning patrol.

At 8.00 am she meets her fellow UN Police officers at the Zam Zam camp. They go over the route and arrangements for the convoy. These patrols are carried out daily to ensure that IDPs are not only protected but also feel safe. UNAMID Police strive to be visible in the entire camp throughout the day. The convoy is usually escorted by Indonesian or Jordanian Formed Police Units (FPU), a group of armed police who provide security, although occasionally a Nepalese FPU provides protection. The camp's security is now far better than it was before UNAMID was established.

During their route through the camp, the convoy makes a number of stops and interacts with the population. Angela and two other female UN Police officers, accompanied by Hadija their language assistant, who translates for them into Arabic, meet with displaced women and ask after their concerns. To ensure a closer and more confident dialogue, male police officers stand aside when issues that could be gender sensitive are broached. Today they talk about the problem of early marriage. They have noticed that it is not rare to find 16-year old girls who

are mothers to four children or others who have already six children at the age of 18.

Remaining respectful of local culture and traditions, Angela explains to the young women the importance of education for girls and the health risks of pregnancy during adolescence. She encourages girls to attend school until they reach the age of 18 and to wait until their bodies are ready for motherhood. She also advises them to allow some time between pregnancies.



Since arriving in Darfur, Angela has noticed that her work has made a genuine impact on the local population. She remains very enthusiastic despite the language barrier, which she bridges with universal sign language and expressions. Each day, she sees more girls going to school and more women aware of their rights.

However, she is also always concerned about complaints over the shortages of adequate food, water and health care. While there isn't much that UNAMID Police can do to address these problems, they pass them on to the various UN Agencies and NGOs operating in the region.

Towards the end of their patrol, Angela and the other police officers write a daily report about the current security situation and progress on their various initiatives for the review of the police commanders who will analyze it.

As Angela's day draws to a close, she begins preparing for the next day's afternoon patrol and the night patrol the day after that. Night patrols are by far the most challenging and dangerous. But, Angela is not bothered, "We are here to help the people of Darfur. This is what we do."

(Source: UNAMID)