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As part of the UNs’ support to the African Union’s Initiative on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, UNAMID has partnered with Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) to provide capacity building on unarmed protection methodologies to African youth and peace leaders in Darfur through an online training course. From June to July, over 40 Darfuris from all 5 Darfur states were trained. Below, you find one out of eight interviews of course graduates who give their insights on how the eight-week course has changed their perspective on how to deal with conflict and how to change behaviours of those around them to prevent or mitigate violence.

How do you see that UCP can contribute to silencing the guns in Darfur?
Due to the nature of the Darfur conflict, I expect it to be very challenging to implement a successful UCP operation due to active armed groups/militias. Their interests conflict with UCP objectives and they may target UCP personnel. Therefore, a thorough conflict assessment is required to determine the effectiveness of a UCP intervention. This will help to establish a UCP presence in Darfur where there is a real need to increase the safety and security of civilians.

Many people, including civilians, have and use weapons in Darfur. Do you see that UCP can effectively protect people in this context? How?
The security situation in Darfur is fragile. Intercommunal relations were impacted by frequent tribal fighting that made the situation prone to further deterioration in all Darfur States. The current situation where violence is common and proliferation of illegal weapons in the hands of armed militias, criminals/outlaws, armed movements is rampant, contributed to creating power imbalances among communities and led to a weak rule of law. Nevertheless, an assessment and conflict analysis will help determining the likelihood of UCP effectiveness to protect people in Darfur.