



## UNITED NATIONS Ombudsman & Mediation Services

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### Delivering in the field - Portrait of the **Regional Branch in Khartoum**

The United Nations Office of Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS) has seven regional branches that provide informal conflict resolution services to employees of the UN Secretariat including staff in peacekeeping missions. One of those branches is located in Khartoum (Sudan) to primarily serve the staff of UNMIS and UNAMID.

The branch in Khartoum is headed by the Regional Ombudsman Ms. Gabrielle Kluck (The Netherlands) who has extensive experience in the field of dispute resolution and change management. She has also worked in the private sector and as a manager for various UN organizations. Ms. Kluck is supported by Ms. Selome Yifru (Ethiopia/USA) who has worked in the Ombudsman field for over 8 years. Gabrielle and Selome are accessible to all staff and managers within the mission area to explore options on ways to resolve various issues and to provide services such as coaching, facilitation and mediation.

*"I take this opportunity to thank you and all others in the Ombudsman's office in (...) who in one way or the other supported the course for the struggle for justice. I will never forget the tireless professional efforts the Ombudsman's office in (...) and (...) demonstrated to the end. Keep up the transparent teamwork spirit to speak for the disadvantaged and contribute to claiming their rights when denied/abused".*

*Anonymous feedback from a visitor*

### The nature of informal resolution

The Ombudsmen and Mediators use a collaborative approach to look at disputes from all perspectives with the objective to identify possible ways forward. The parties remain in control of the resolution process and determine the outcome that best meets their needs. Such an informal approach also allows for swift and sustainable solutions to disputes.

### The work of the Regional Branch in Khartoum



Gabrielle Kluck, Regional Ombudsman (Khartoum)

What is considered as success is not only the resolution of conflict, but more importantly the confidence building and empowerment of United Nations personnel to solve their workplace dispute collaboratively. This is how the office sees its role and the value of its presence in the mission areas.

In 2010, the Regional Branch in Khartoum conducted visits to several field sector locations and handled 141 cases which related to benefits and entitlements, job and career, evaluative & peer relationships, administration of services and leadership & management concerns.

Ms. Kluck notes: *"In addition to staff visiting the office for individual concerns, there is an encouraging trend of managers, including senior managers, who contact the Ombudsman and seek informal resolution of conflicts in their team. There is a growing*

awareness among staff at all levels that the Ombudsman can provide support to solve their disputes effectively and a willingness to prevent the escalation of issues.”

## Guiding principles of an Ombudsman

**Independent** – An Ombudsman is independent in structure and function from all United Nations organs and officials and has direct access to the Secretary-General.

**Neutral and Impartial** – An Ombudsman does not take sides in a conflict. S/he reviews each situation objectively and treats all parties equally.

**Confidential** – An Ombudsman does not keep records for the United Nations or any other party. S/he holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so.



UN Container village 6 in El Fasher, Darfur (Sudan)

**Informal** – An Ombudsman does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure relating to concerns brought to his/her attention.

## Contact the Ombudsman if you have a work related concern and you:

- Don't know who to talk to
- Would like a confidential or “off-the-record” conversation
- Don't know how to address your concerns
- Have not yet decided on a course of action
- Are uncertain of possible consequences
- Have pursued formal redress and want to explore alternatives

## Contacting an Ombudsman is always a good first step!

The Regional Office in Khartoum is located in UNMIS HQ o8, building 6, 1<sup>st</sup> floor (one floor up from the Clinic).

Tel: +249 1 8708 6528 / Intermission 190-6528, Email: [kluck@un.org](mailto:kluck@un.org) or [yifru@un.org](mailto:yifru@un.org).

Tel: 1 917 367 5731 (New York), Email: [ombudsmediation@un.org](mailto:ombudsmediation@un.org)

Find out more at: [www.un.org/ombudsman](http://www.un.org/ombudsman) and use the Secure Contact Form to contact one of the Ombudsmen or Mediators confidentially. Services are available in all six UN languages.

**“Just as the United Nations addresses conflicts around the world, so must we also pay close attention to resolving and managing conflicts within the organization. I therefore encourage all of you to make use of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services”.**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon