

## Supporting Darfur Law Graduates to Join Legal Profession

In Darfur, where conflict continues to place significant strains on the justice system, UNDP's Rule of Law Programme is sponsoring low-income law graduates to sit for the Bar Examination held in Khartoum, allowing them the right to practice law in the region.

The formal justice system in Darfur has suffered greatly from the conflict, but statutory courts continue to operate in the main cities. Despite instability, lack of resources and restrictions on movement, an increasing number of people are seeking justice and legal redress. However, there aren't enough lawyers to meet these demands, and most of the Darfurian population cannot afford to pay for legal representation. In response to this situation, UNDP in collaboration with national and international development partners, has established a legal aid network of 61 lawyers who provide legal aid to vulnerable groups.

UNDP's Rule of Law Programme in Darfur also provides support to law graduates who are unable to sit for the Bar Exam due to the ongoing conflict. To practice law, graduates must pass the Bar Exam that is held in Khartoum twice a year. However, only a handful of students from Darfur can afford to spend the approximately 800 dollars to cover the airfare, course fees, accommodation, and reference books needed for the exam.

This year UNDP has sponsored 45 law graduates from Darfur to sit for the Bar



Exam. The exam lasts a full week and covers Sudanese legislation and jurisprudence, British Common Law, and Sharia. As part of the agreement, students who qualify for the scholarship programme must commit themselves to providing free legal advice for a minimum of six months.

The sponsorship of Darfurian law graduates is closely linked to UNDP's ongoing collaboration with Nyala, El-Geneina and El-Fasher's state Universities in Darfur. In 2006, UNDP helped establish legal libraries on campus to provide students and academia with access to Sudanese domestic law and international legal documents. Libraries are also equipped with computers with broadband internet access. With the establishment of full-fledged law faculties in Nyala and El Fasher, UNDP's cooperation with the Darfurian academic institutions will be significantly enhanced.